# THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

**and the Madness of Politics**

**"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"**

STOCKTON

# THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

## and the Madness of Politics

## 1.7

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# Preface

As David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he faced a crisis: the gates of the city were too small for His Majesty to enter. David stood up and shouted, “Lift up your heads, O Ye Gates!”

Likewise, our view of Christ is too small, too tiny, too petite. Let us “lift up our heads” that we might have the capacity to receive the major message of Scripture, “the Lord reigns.”

A man does not start out his Christian life believing “the Lord reigns.”

He begins his pilgrim journey thinking he must do something to change the world . . . but as he matures, he realizes not only that he can’t change the world, that he struggles to change himself.

This E-book is a collection of my work on what God has taught me about His sovereignty – a collection of little gems to enlighten the mind’s eye and to create trust.

May the Lord use it to add to your understanding on how “the Lord pleases, he does . . . in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps;” that history is merely an outworking of His will made before the foundation of the world.

Dr. Brooky Stockton, ret. pastor / teacher

# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

# The Madness of Politics

> "Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man." — R. C. Sproul

Call me positive. The more you learn about the sovereignty of God the easier it becomes to smile at the news.

You know we are living in a culture of death when a population tolerates drag queens reading Bible stories to children, accepts queer marriage, permits lesbians to lead a White House press conference, appoints transgenders to elected positions, turns a blind eye to thousands of illegals crossing the southern border every day, lies about the death-effects of vaxxines, does nothing about gun grabbing Governors banning open carry rights, accepts NATO pushing the Russian Bear into a corner daring him to push a nuclear button, countenances politicians smiling at 100-200 Ukrainian men being killed in combat every day, suffers Congressmen promoting nuclear war, and tolerating government officials that don't know the difference between a boy and a girl.

Madness is in the air. Knees knock. Hands tremble. Mouths are tied in the middle and flapping at both ends.

A report came out in September 2023 saying California wants to ban grass; that trains are carrying box cars of migrants into the U.S.A.; death darts named "COMIRNATY" are sent to U.S. military bases; blue states permit theft and looting, and some bankers want to outlaw private property to save the planet.

The looney left wants to ban all gasoline cars, lawnmowers, gas stoves, wood stoves, over the counter cough medicines, filtered drinking water, national citizenship, private wells, gardening without a license, firearms, gender separation, and more (RM News 9-20-2023).

It seems like the monkeys are running the zoo and that these primates want to create a troop of unhappiness.

> "As I look at America today, I am not afraid to say that I am afraid."—Bertram Gross, Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America

> "There's absolutely no evidence to support the statement that [America is] the greatest country in the world. We're 7th in literacy, 27th in math, 22nd in science, 49th in life expectancy, 178th in infant mortality, 3rd in median household income, number 4 in labor force and number 4 in exports. We lead the world in only three categories: number of incarcerated citizens per capita, number of adults who believe angels are real and defense

> spending, where we spend more than the next 26 countries combined, 25 of whom are allies…" (Rutherford, Hope).
>
> "When the power of love overcomes the **love of power**, the world will know peace" (Jimi Hendrix).

"It's like we're living in madness," said Danielle Gentile. But worse, madness has become a way of life around the world. Madness is normal; sanity is insane.

> "There's something not right with our politics right now. It's become stranger, uglier, and increasingly disorienting" (The Age).

That man is all powerful and God is impotent has flooded the minds of modern men like a giant tidal wave.

It feels like an unmoored ship in the middle of a storm . . . like a bear running at full speed going around in circles gobbling up ants . . . like the insanity of Colonel Custer leading the charge while whipping a dead horse . . . like showing mercy to mosquitos.

> "Political discourse has become nothing but shouts and lies and threats. Political loyalties are about who you hate, not who you love. And all this ignorant bile is justified by making up nonsensical 'facts'. The crazier the belief, the more strongly it's held." (John Verdon, White River Burning)

**Q**: **Where is God in the midst of all this craziness?**

Arthur Pink observed:

> "The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man." (Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God)

Furthermore, the manic Arminian media, on the left and right, send a clear message: "Man is in charge of the universe. We've got to do something," anything: vote, write, protest, shout, spit, scream, organize, shoot somebody, wear a mask and take a triple vaxxine.

The Arminian bent in politics is expressed by Ocala Starbanner:

> "We are the ones who must stop the madness of America."

But, this international crisis is bigger than the voter, bigger than the Democrat / Republican Party, and bigger than any single nation.

Who has peace ruling the heart these days? When the human heart can't find peace it either goes berserk or slithers into the sloth of despond.

Dave Rubin has the right perspective,

"When we fail to live a life outside politics, we become a slave to it."

During these days, we are in desperate need of divine perspective . . . but, Jesus may be more than modern man can handle.

"Jesus is too much for us. The church's later treatment of the gospels is one long effort to rescue Jesus from 'extremism'" — Gary Wills, What Jesus Meant.

**Perfect Peace**

Peace begins when we look at the sovereignty of God to realize these matters are in His capable hands and that only He can provide a remedy for the madness.

As the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, He uses His knowledge, power, and authority to govern human events so that all things, good and evil, conform to His Divine will.

The Holy Scripture assigns Sovereignty to the LORD God declaring Him to have supreme authority, control, and power over all things: over time, space, and matter; over heaven, earth, and hell; over animals on the land, fish in the sea, and birds in the air; over the living and the dying; over the sick and the healthy; over wealth and poverty; over men and women; over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future between the two eternities.

Our struggles are not the product of bad karma or the result of lubricous chance. Every detail in our lives was ordained before the world began. Even our struggle with personal sins is appointed of God to wean us from evil and woo us to righteousness – not to make us weak, but to strengthen our resolve to be pure and holy devoted to Him.

The absolute, irresistible, and infinite light shining in our eyes is the sovereignty of God in Scripture. The events of earth are the out workings of a God who does what He pleases, when He pleases, and only as He pleases.

Nothing about the choices of men, nor errands of angels, nor deeds of the Devil, nor ploys of politicians can come to pass unless God has purposed it. Both good and evil (tragedy) are from Him (c.f. the Book of Esther; Isaiah 45:7).

Winds, rains, and droughts are from Him. Tsunamis, torrential hurricanes, and tornadoes cannot occur unless God ordains it. He is the cause of light and darkness, heat and cold, the sun and the moon, wealth and poverty, fitness and weakness, peace and war. Our opportunities and disappointment, successes and failures, gains and losses are from Him – not to hurt us but for us to consider Him and be better for it.

> Psalm 46:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

This work is a list of Bible verses on God's sovereignty with comments. Instead of shouting and screaming at the news, read these texts, consider them carefully as ultimate truth, and bring your soul to rest. Rest, Soul, Rest!

> "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength . . .'" – Isaiah 30:15

After reading an article titled, "10 Reasons why *this year* will be the Worst Year Ever", by Giacomo Arcaro, I have a message for these fear mongers:

> "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" – Psalm 76:10

Now you can smile at the news.

# The Lord God Reigns

**the Main Message of the Bible**

**"The LORD shall reign for ever and ever" (Exodus 18:15)-.**

There are two types of people: those who believe man is in charge of his future, and Bible students who believe God controls the future.

The good news of Holy Scripture is that *the Lord God reigns!*

The good news is not "I got myself born" and "I can change the world," but that God is and that He is in charge of the universe.

God is sovereign in creation, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

When sin entered the history, men became confused about who is running the world. Great monarchs like Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, the Caesars, Napoleon, and the Rothschilds marshaled their forces to shape the world according to their own ambitions. All became frustrated and failed.

The last lesson Job learned from his painful trail was that "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted"- Job 42:2.

The exodus taught the redeemed, "*The LORD shall reign for ever and ever*" - Exodus 15:18.

Psalms has a major message: "*God reigneth over the heathen (nations)*" – Psalm 47:8.

The Spirit commissioned Israel to say among the nations "*the LORD reigneth*" – Psalm 96:10.

The Old Testament gospel comes to us as, "*the LORD reigneth*" – Psalm 97:1, 99:1.

When King David perceived the sovereignty of God and the establishment of His kingdom on earth, the Spirit wrote, "*This concludes the prayers of David*" (Psalm 72).

Isaiah's proclaimed his gospel as, "***Thy God reigneth***!" - Isaiah 52:7

The fires of hope that ignited the remnant was "*the LORD shall reign over them in Mount Zion*" – Micah 4:7.

In the New Testament we learn that the major message of John the Baptist, Jesus, Philip, Paul, and Peter was "the kingdom of God"; that is, the rule of

God arrived in the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. History is moving toward its grand conclusion by the will and power of God.

The good news of the gospel declares a Christ that "*must reign till he puts all enemies under his feet*" – 1 Corinthians 15:25.

The Book of Revelation ends with this message:

> "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" – Revelation 19:6.

But, we are born blind to these things.

Growing up, we are attracted to the bright lights in Tensile Town with all its glittering gold and promises of fame and happiness. Not long into our journey, we learn we've been fed a lie and that life has got to be more that accumulating money and experiencing pleasure. Bob Marley was correct when he said, "Money can't buy life."

But, it is worse than this!

When men don't acknowledge the LORD God, governments "*hate you and shall reign over you*" – Leviticus 26:17.

In believing the gospel, we are wonderfully changed . . . but not enough. We struggle in our own weak way to be better with paltry results.

Somewhere on this journey some depressed Presbyterian shares with us that God is sovereign and that He is in control of history. We hear it; but we don't believe it . . . until we mature in Scripture and gain life experiences.

Men give lip service to God's sovereignty, but in practice they believe they are in charge of their own destiny.

Arthur Pink had this to say:

> "To argue that God is "trying His best" to save all mankind, but that the majority of men will not let Him save them, is to insist that the will of the Creator is impotent, and that the will of the creature is omnipotent."(Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God)

Here is a fundamental difference between the man of faith and the man of unbelief. The unbeliever is 'of the world', judges everything by worldly standards, views life from the standpoint of time and sense, and weighs everything in the balances of his own carnal making.

But the man of faith brings in God, looks at everything from His standpoint, estimates values by spiritual standards, and views life in the light of eternity. Doing this, he receives whatever comes as from the hand of God. Doing this, his heart is calm in the midst of the storm. Doing this, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God."(Arthur W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God)

There is not a hair on our head that can be removed without His consent. Nor is there a war on earth that God is not using to purge evil; to cause politicians to consider the error of their ways; and, to call men to repentance and faith.

In the last lap of the race, we learned what was there all the time:

> "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" "that no purpose of His can be thwarted!" Hallelujah!

# Glorious Verses on the Sovereignty of God

**“that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”**

# Daniel 4:17

# 1. Genesis 1:1

## God is Sovereign in Creation

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

In His sovereignty and by His power God (Elohim) created heaven and earth. He did not ask for permission because He alone has authority and power to do as He pleases.

We owe our existence to the Creator (1:26), not the State. We are men, **not** homosapiens, primates, or apes that perform bipedal locomotion. (See 1 U.S.C. § 8).

We did **not** evolve from some primordial soup, **nor** are we the product of time + chance. We are created by Christ (John 1:1-3) for His glory and are accountable to Him alone.

The earth belongs to God, not government; and, he gives the land to families, not the State.

> Psalm 24:1 The earth *is* the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Our duty is to take dominion of the earth (Genesis 1:26-28); that is, we have a God-given right to exist, to work, and to do his will — even the right to live somewhere on this earth without being taxed for our existence by government. Property taxes are the most egregious of all taxes because the State maintains an unauthorized power to enslave every men making them pay for their existence and happiness.

Rights come from God, not the empire. We don't need a license from the State to exist or exercise the right to work, marry, build a home, ride a horse, and have children.

The government competes with God for our time, money, and devotion. It even pretends to be a god from cradle to grave. Our allegiance is to the Lord, not the all-mighty, all-grasping, all-controlling State. Believers are called to serve Him and to use their talents, freedom, and resources to glorify Him, **not** human institutions.

Therefore, let us live as free men, not in fear of the authoritarian State, but courageously claiming our rights to do His will during our pilgrimage on earth.

# 2. Genesis 2:24

## God is sovereign in marriage

**Genesis 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**

God is sovereign over all of His institutions: marriage, government, and the church. He created the institution of marriage, **not** the State. It must be governed by His rules, **not** the statutes of some legislature.

The foundational rule for a healthy marriage follows this command: Leave, Cleave, and Weave.

Marriage involves maturity (20 years of age), mutual consent of the parties, and permission to marry by both sets of parents. Marriage is a contract between a man and a woman to live together as man and wife under the laws of the Almighty wherein the man is the appointed head of the home and the wife takes the roll of a willing helpmeet.

When God is part of a contract, it is called a "covenant." If a man cannot write his own contract with the help of parents and make a public declaration of marriage, he is not mature enough to get married.

Marriage commences with an aggreement is consummated by a sexual union. Marital intimacy is His gift. Best not to open the package before the wedding night.

Due to the entrance of sin into history by the first couple, God commands the woman to surrender to the authority of her husband. Paul called it submission (Ephesians 5:25) – the first governmental rule for the home. Due to Eve's transgression and her deception, the Lord sentences the woman to a lifetime of servitude to her husband to prevent a relapse of Eve's transgression. Accept it and thrive; or reject it and do a nose-dive. Marriages go awry when (2) the wife seeks to control her husband and dominate him (Genesis 3:16; Proverbs 21:19), and (2) when the man abandons his leadership role and becomes submissive to his wife.

This rule of submission and being under the authority of a man applies to church and to government. Women are not permitted to rule over men in marriage, government, or the church (1 Corinthians 14: 34-35; 1 Timothy 2:8ff).

Husbands have a duty to love and provide for their wives, but this requirement is not the basis for the wife's submission. She is required to happily arrange herself under her husband's authority regardless of his spiritual state for the

glory of God — the struggle of every woman (1 Peter 3:1-5); that is, women must learn how to be good wives and to love their husbands (Titus 2:4-5).

The greatest threat to world peace is not massive militaries and nuclear bombs, but "odious" (hateful) women who after they are married "disquiet the world" (Proverbs 30:23).

Happiness is not found behind a desk on a 9th story skyscraper working for a corporation but in the home building a family; that is, women have no authority from the Creator to rule over men as judges, legislators, or governors. In so doing, they unwittingly strike a death blow to their marriage. The misery caused by Nancy Pelosi, Hillary Clinton, Majorie Taylor Green, and Christie Noem come to mind.

While the church cannot do without the gifts and labor of Godly sisters working for the gospel, neither can a church survive the encroachment of women ruling over men – the apostasy of our time (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

Feminism challenges all of God's rules for marriage, church, and government. Therefore, church men must be firmly and vigorously opposed to this trespass lest weak men and dominant women destroy the health of society. One could easily argue the feminist cult and the modern, secular doctrine of "equality" are the greatest threat to God's institutions. Women rulers create chaos — like throwing a deck of cards into a hurricane.

# 3. Genesis 18:25

**"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**

The eyes of faith recognize God's sovereignty and confess with the mouth that He has an absolute right to do as He pleases. He runs His creation by His rules!

Whether He may send poverty, sickness, or war, every bleeding heart will look up and confess, "S*hall not the Judge of this earth do what is right!*"

Though there is struggle and disappointment, the follower of Christ can say to the storm, "*Peace be still*!" "*Thy will be done*!"

To say that God is sovereign is to declare to others that He is "*The Governor among the nation*s" (Psalms 22:28); that He will always do what is right even if it is a rebuke to our troubled souls.

He is not impotent! Nor are a congress of fools stronger than one cell in the mighty arm of the Lord. We need only consider His will in the midst of the madness and obey Him without reserve, without regret, and without retreat.

# 4. Genesis 50:20

## Goodness and Badness

**"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."**

If you had power, what would it look like – the Grand Wizard of the KKK or the elf driver of Santa's Christmas sled?

God is greater than the kakistocracy[1] and empleomania[2] of men, and exercises veto power over the devious plans of throttlebottoms.[3]

In the matter of intense family politics, Joseph's brothers hated him, kidnapped him, and sold him as a slave to a caravaneer headed for Egypt.

In this instance, God used their treachery as integrity training for Joseph, exalted him as Vice Regent of Egypt, and used the Hebrew to not only save Jacob's family from famine, but the whole nation of Egypt from starvation.

> " . . . that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." – Daniel 4:17

[1] Kakistocracy: A government by the worst of men.

[2] Empleomania: A mania for holding public office.

[3] Throttlebottom: an innocuously inept and futile person in public office

# 5. Exodus 4:11

## Gifts and Abilities

**"Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD (I Am)?"**

Who can forge the lines, "Ding dong, the wicked witch is dead."

Many of us wish the clock would strike 13 and bellow out the glorious news, "Ding dong, Satan is dead."

In the Wizard of Oz, the "good witch" Glinda tells Dorothy she had the power to go home all along: "*Just click your heels together*!"

Likewise, God has given us the power to live free of saurkrauts associated with the municipal corporation in Washington D.C.

Both good and bad rulers are set in place by the LORD, but for different purposes.

God selected Moses who had Egypt beat out of him, and made him the great mediator of law to Israel. Likewise, God selects deplorable rulers like Pharaoh to shame proud nations (Romans 9:17).

When God called Moses to be his mouthpiece to Pharaoh, the 80 year old shepherd protested saying he was not articulate enough for the task. The LORD focused Moses on His unlimited power over the skills of men.

God makes people male or female. God gives men eloquence, hearing, sight, and musical ability. Likewise, "*I Am that I Am*" makes men mute, deaf, and blind.

Men are neither champions nor victims of chance. The LORD gives people intelligence, beauty, and talent; and, it is He who makes people simple-minded, ordinary-looking, weak framed, and gifted with many talents.

While good gifts gladden the heart, none of us should murmur if lesser gifts fall into our lot. Perhaps, God is more glorified in our weakness than in our strength. Moreover, if you had what you crave, what would you do with it?

Our Lord was the Prince of the kings of the earth, but he walked as a servant among men. David wandered around the mountains while Saul sat on a throne; Elijah groaned out prayers in a cave while Jezebel enjoyed pleasures in her palace; John the Baptist dressed in camel hair and foraged for locusts while Caiaphas wore the garment of a high priest enjoying the benefits of Rome. God's greatest eat beans and rice alone at home while the pretenders eat ribeye steak with other entrepreneurs at Caesar's Palace.

Those with great gifts have no basis for pride, and those with lowly gifts, have no basis for shame.

Let all praise God and give Him the glory. For it is the LORD *"Who has made me thus"* (Romans 9:20).

# 6. Exodus 5:2

## Who is the LORD?

**And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.**

When Moses went into Pharaoh's court he said, "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, 'Let my people go.'"

Then, Pharaoh asked the most important question ever asked in the Bible, "Who is the LORD?"

He discovered the answer the hard way by seeing his nation devastated by ten plagues along the Nile.

Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth due to its economy and large population. Because he did not obey the LORD, the judgments ruined his country — decimating its population and wrecking the Nile harvest. In the end, Pharaoh discovered the LORD was the God above all gods, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and that nations must obey Him . . . or else.

Likewise today, the nations would do well to learn Who is the LORD and obey Him . . . not nature, not a god of their own making, not Allah, not Shiva, and not some generic, man-made deity. The LORD is sovereign and all men are accountable to Him.

From the New Testament we learn that Jesus is the LORD who brought Israel out of Egypt (Jude 5). Obey Him or experience His judgments. The Psalmist said it this way, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way."

# 7. Exodus 20:1-3

**And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**

This text is the enacting clause to the Ten Commandments. It provides the source of authority of the law. The law is a product of God's sovereignty, "the LORD thy God" and His love, "I brought the out of the land of Egypt."

Likewise, gods are the source of law. When a nation changes its laws, it is because it has changed its gods . . . its religion. History is replete with examples of nations forsaking the law of the LORD God and replacing it with the religion of Marxism, feminism, psychology, and evolution.

Because the Lord is sovereign, He makes law. He is man's only Lawgiver (James 4:12). Congress does not make law, it makes statutes for its corporations, government employees, and those in contract with the State. While no man is responsible to obey congressional bills and statutes, all men are responsible to obey the living God. And, those that keep the Ten Commandments are a threat to no man.

The defense "ignorance of the law is not excuse applies to common law, not statutory law. No judge on earth knows all law for statutory persons, but all men are responsible to the common law: do not steal, do not kill . . .

Because He loves sinners, He guides them through law. His law-order is not only good for me; it is good for all men and all of man's institutions.

The notion that man is at liberty to choose his own law order is the product of apostasy . . . a product of Arminian and antinomian thinking; a forest fire with winds howling and heat blazing.

# 8. Leviticus 19:1-4

**And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God.**

In this chapter, the Lord calls men to be holy. Three times, the Spirit informs us that He is Source of law. He has authority to enact law because He is the "LORD God;" that is, law is a product of His sovereignty, holiness, and love. And, all men including politicians are called to honor His rules for life.

The first two rules of holiness in this chapter require positive spiritual energy – honor your parents and keep my Sabbaths.

The whole idea that man is free to choose his own laws, own values, and make his own choices about the law he will serve is a product of antinomian, Arminian apostasy; a product of pride — a crown worn by those who have never earned a kingdom — a claim made by slaves chained to sin —a candle carried by those insignificant people who want to be seen in the shadows of Moses.

Gods are the source of law. To claim you follow your own values is like saying that you are your own god.

Holy men follow the law of the LORD God, honor their parents, and keep His statutes.

They follow statues that are consistent with the common law (God's law) . . . and avoid all statutes that apply to corporations. No bill in Congress has relevance for Christian-men unless they are under contract with the State — and, most are not.

> "All codes, rules and regulations are applicable to the government authorities **only**, not human/Creators (sic) in accordance with God's laws. All codes, rules and regulations are unconstitutional and lacking in due process..." Rodriques v Ray Donavan (U.S. Department of Labor), 769 F. 2d 1344, 1348 (1985)
>
> "**Statutes apply only to state** created creatures known as corporations no matter whether [creatures of statute and offices of] state, local, or federal [government]." (Colonial Pipeline Co. v. Traigle, 421 US 100. (1975) ).

> A concurrent or 'joint resolution'of legislature is not "Law," (Koenig v. Flynn, 258 N.Y. 292, 179 N. E. 705, 707; Ward v State, 176 Okl. 368, 56 P.2d 136, 137; State ex rel. Todd v. Yelle, 7 Wash.2d 443, 110 P.2d 162, 165).
>
> A "Statute' is not a Law," (Flournoy v. First Nat. Bank of Shreveport, 197 La. 1067, 3 So.2d 244, 248),

There is one Lord and one Lawgiver – obey his law (James 4:12).

Government is not God! But, if a man thinks the future is wrapped up in what the State does, then government is his god . . . and, you cannot expect him not to betray you.

# 9. Deuteronomy 20:19

**When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege:**

In a world full of evil men with evil ideas, war is necessary to correct course. God is sovereign even in war (Isaiah 45:7). He established rules for war to prevent unnecessary destruction and death.

War is a declaration of capital punishment against law-breakers; that is, against nations controlled by rebels of God's law-order. He even uses pagan nations to afflict his own people who have sinned against Him. Babylon conquering Jerusalem comes to mind (605-586 BC).

War is all about killing people (capital punishment) and destroying things.

In this text, the LORD limited what armies could destroy. They could cut down trees to make weapons, but they could **not** cut down fruit trees because fruit trees sustain life. War is political; that is, war is against profane ideas and evil regimes, **not** against the environment or civilian infrastructure.

War must be declared or killing people is an aggressive act of murder without probable cause. Reasonable terms of peace must first be offered — requirements consistent with God's law-order (Deuteronomy 20:10-15). If nations do not give up their institutional common law crimes, war becomes a necessity.

The application is simple: in war, militaries can attack military targets but not the infrastructure that supports life; water supplies, fields, civilian homes, schools, hospitals, and electrical grids that enable life. Most international rules of war are designed to protect innocent life and to prevent lawless militaries from destroying non-military targets – infrastructure necessary to sustain life and national identity.

In other parts of God's law, war requires strict discipline among the troops like maintaining latrines (Deuteronomy 23:12-14). Just because war involves chaos does not excuse soldiers from the disciplines of holiness, hygiene, and humanness. Blasphemy is forbidden even in war (Exodus 20:7).

Modern nations, like Israel and the United States (2026) that acknowledges no rules in warfare are lawless, mutinous regimes moving in rebellion against Gods law-order; and, are destined for divine reprimand.

# 10. Deuteronomy 32:39

## The Arbitrator of Life

**"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand."**

"Behind every man now alive stands thirty ghosts, for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living" wrote Arthur Clark in A Space Odyssey.

The living would do well to consider that the Lord is the Arbitrator of life and they are but few hours away from being one of the ghosts.

The first word in the sentence is the imperative "*See*." And, we would do well to obey it!

In contrast to the idols of the day, the Spirit emphasizes the solitariness of the true God. While there are many pretenders, the LORD **is** the only self-existent, self-contained, self-satisfied God in need of naught. His creation adds nothing to him.

The adverb "*no*" in the second sentence stands in the emphatic position in Hebrew! What a rebuke to modern man that views all religions as equal . . . as good . . . as one of many roads to Heaven. Few, however, talk about many roads to hell. Oh, the folly of British omnism that approves of spiritual devotion to all religions.

The pronouns "**I**" "**I**" (*ani ani*) are in the emphatic position in this sentence. While He **is**, others are NOT! He **is** the Great **I Am**. He **was**, **IS**, and **shall be** what his children need him to be.

> *"I am the arbiter of life and death, the dispenser of prosperity and adversity, and the author of national changes and revolutions, whether in the way of mercy or judgment." – Benson*

We are too quick to attribute death to the Devil and healing to nature. God kills and so can men. But, only the LORD can make men alive. He wounds (shattering bones - Numbers 24:8), and so can men, but only the LORD can heal broken hearts and broken bones. The Great "*I Am*" claims **exclusive agency** over death and life, injury and healing, sickness and health.

To his people, the Great "*I Am*" presents Himself to men as the Arbitrator of life and death; the Source of prosperity and adversity; the Wounder and Healer of men. But to his enemies, the Lord's hand becomes an invincible fortress from

which rebels cannot escape. There are no fugitives that can vanish from his omnipotent eye or His vice-grip on their future.

# 11. Judges 20:18-21

## Why the Godly Suffer Defeat

**Judges 20:18-21 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first . . . 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah . . . 21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men.**

The men of Israel received a report about gross Sodomite sins in Benjamin and gathered together to purge this evil from the Tribe of Benjamin. After an investigation, the report was confirmed as true. Judgment was the order of the day — not only for the bad guys, but for the good guys.

Israel (the good guys) sought the Lord's counsel about whether it was His will for the nation to use the military to force Benjamin (the bad guys) to comply with God's law. The sovereign LORD issued the order for the nation to strike Benjamin . . . but, Israel with 400,00 soldiers lost the battle and Benjamin with 22,000 soldiers prevailed; that is, Israel (the good guys) obeyed the Lord and lost the battle to Benjamin (the bad guys) . . . even after much prayer.

Q: How can that be? Why does God allow His righteous people to be defeated and His enemies (Benjamin) to obtain the victory? Forty thousand "good guys" were killed and not one Benjamite (bad guy) lost his life.

The short answer is that God is sovereign. He brings defeat and he gives the victory; man proposes and God disposes . . . whether progression or egression, God is the primary cause.

**20:28 And the LORD said, Go up; for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand.**

The lessons in this chapter are many, but we will only look at one: Notice that God uses His enemies (compliant, Sodomite Benjamin) to humble, purify the better tribes of their sins —to perfect their dependence on the Sovereign LORD who "will deliver them into thine hand." And, He did! (20:26-44).

In Habakkuk's day, God use wicked Babylon to purify Jerusalem.

Circa 871, God used the cruel Vikings to purge the church and England of effeminate Christianity, to create mighty knights, to introduce the Vikings to

the gospel, and raise up strong, masculine British kings to make England a true Christian nation.

God used crushing power of Rome to destroy geo-political

God used the apostate north to defeat the Bible belt South and in so doing brought in thousands of southerners into the kingdom (Consider the two revivals in the confederate army).

God used WWII to humble apostate England and it empire; and, it could be said that God used England to humble German who fell into the Wellhausen school of liberalism.

God used the Vietnamese to defeat the United State to enhance the greatest rival in American history (1965-1985).

God used Muslim Iran to defeat the United States in the Persian Gulf, to humble the nation, and to purify America who fell into gender-bender confusion, lawlessness, avarice, and imperialism.

There are times in the life of Christian-people and a nation that the sovereign God uses wildfires to clear out the dead underbrush and stimulate new growth.

# 12. 1 Samuel 2:3:

**Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.**

This text was quoted by Hannah after the sovereign Lord answered her prayer of relief from childlessness and verbal abuse by her husband's co-wife — an odious woman in love with power, criticism, and control — an effort by Hannah to shift the readers focus from her sour roommate to the sovereignty of the LORD God.

But, this attraction to power is not only shared by neighborhood control-freaks, it dominates ambitious women and those seeking votes for public office. Megalomania is a delusional, intense obsession with power, grandeur, and self-importance. Religiously speaking, megalomania appears to be an out-growth of Arminianism and those that believe in the sovereignty of man.

Megalomania is the love of power; and, pride is the source of the drive to control others -- even the willingness to bomb nations "into the stone age" (Donald Trump) — *Wille zur Macht* in German meaning the "will to power," (famously used by Nietzsche).

Hedonistic leaders tend to create office environments where they are surrounded by "psycho-phants" leading them to believe they are "the cat's pajamas."

Megalomaniacs love death . . . barking out criticism and producing conflict because that is the ultimate power over man – (Proverbs 8:36).

What is needed is the power of love.

> "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace" (Jimi Hendrix).

# 13. 1 Samuel 2:6-8

## Life and Death, Triumph and Trouble

**"The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world."**

The Arminian mind thinks life is the sum total of their choices, but Hannah saw it otherwise.

"Hannah looks beyond the gift, and praises the Giver. She rejoiced in the salvation of the Lord, and in expectation of His coming, who is the whole salvation of his people." (Matthew-Henry)

Life and death, heaven and hell, riches and poverty, fame and obscurity come from the same sovereign LORD. Nothing in the affairs of men is left to chance.

Caring Providence administered by the God to whom Hannah prayed has universal appeal. *He is not far from any of us* (Acts 17:27). Because we know the sweets and the bitters of life belong to Him, believers can rely upon His wisdom, love, and power to guide them. He can change circumstances in a moment: "He lifts up the needy."

"*pillars of the earth*" acts as a metaphor for the stability of a flat earth. While circumstances change, the limited cosmos does not. What he creates, He sustains. He is the nuclear glue that holds every atom together. He Who holds up the stars, holds us in the palm of His hand (Colossian 1:16-17).

Is there anything more foolish than to think that government officials can save the planet from climate change by taxing the population into poverty? Politics appears to be the only place where stupidity is not a handicap.

> The trick is to get education out of politics and to get it into the heads of politicians.

# 14. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

## King of All

**"Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."**

In King David's state of the union address, he announces the completion of his plans to build the nation a temple for God and offers this prayer to the Lord.

He did not praise politicians or the genius of men.

He saw God as the Source of His success and the Strength of the nation. His vision was **not** a nation united around an all-powerful government, but a nation tethered to the Lord God Omnipotent.

*Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty:* David attributes all that men admire to the Lord: greatness and fame, power and strength, glory and beauty, victory and supremacy, majesty and honor.

*"for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine"***;** Because all things are made by Him, they belong to Him, He exercises exclusive rights over all things just as the creator of a thing has every right to do.

"*thine is the kingdom, O Lord*"; David attributes ownership and authority over all creatures to the Lord. He rules as the One and Only Sovereign.

"*and thou art exalted as head above all*; Headship, authority, dominion, and the right to rule angels in heaven and men on earth belongs to God alone. The NT informs us that Christ is the Head of man, the Head of rulers, and the Head of the church (Colossians 1:25-18; 2:8-12; Revelation 1:5).

"Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all:" Wealth, fame, political power, and strength are given by God to the noble and ignoble, that in the end God may be glorified in His dispensation of justice and mercy throughout history.

Perhaps God is more glorified by our obedience to Him in times of poverty and sickness than He would be if we were healthy and wealthy; and, that the glory of His justice on the rich and famous on the Day of Judgment will be more apparent to those who have been greatly grieved by their wickedness and blasphemies.

# 15. 1 Kings 22:34-35

## Guiding Arrows

ERV**"Then a soldier in the distance pulled back as far as he could on his bow and shot an arrow into the air. The arrow happened to hit the king of Israel in a small hole where his armor was fastened together. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, "I've been hit! Turn the chariot around and take me off the battlefield!" The armies continued to fight while King Ahab was propped up in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot, looking out toward the Arameans. His blood ran down onto the floor of the chariot. Later in the evening, he died."**

It has been said that half the accidents happen at home, the other half happen in Washington D.C.

Is there such a thing as "accidents?" Not according to this text.

The Spirit does not name the soldier or tell us where he was aiming. A random shot directed at the army, without aim, or a target, or any ambition of reaching Ahab, or any particular person; the arrow landed between the seams of the king's armor. An impossible shot even for Robin Hood!

God directs the weapons of men and approves of their effects. There is no armor, no shield, no solid steel bunker, and no "dumb" (full body armor) that can protect a man from the arrows of His vengeance. Moreover, there is no weapon formed that can reach the Christian man unless its effect is approved of God.

All this effort by government officials to build DUMBs (Deep Underground Military Bases) to protect them from some global catastrophe stinks with extremism. Common sense is a deodorant, and politicians never use it.

# 16. 2 Chronicles 20:6

## Power and Might

**"And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?"**

In listening to the news, a madness drifs through the air.

It appears politicians love lies, death, and war. History shows that war is better at abolishing nations, than nations are of abolishing war.

According to Scripture these madmen are restrained by the LORD God. Consequently, parliamentarians are the most frustrated of all men because they can't get their will done on earth.

When the Moabites and Ammonites marched their armies from the east sea to plunder Jerusalem, lips trembled and knees knocked.

Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and prayed. Without a standing military, he relied upon the omnipresence, authority, and sovereignty of the LORD God. Bowing his knee, the king entrusted the destiny of his people into infinite hands infused with iron power.

Hastily organizing a volunteer army, he appointed the temple guards (Levites) as the special operations singing corp who formed the tip of the spear for Israel's armed forces.

**"Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness," – 20:20-21**

As they marched to battle, the Levites led the army singing chants and praises to the Lord – a roaring that must have sounded like a train coming down the track whistling and chugging from the lungs of Hebrew soldiers.

Hearing the bellows of praise and the banging of drums, the songs of faith knocked the invaders dead.

**"And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." -20:22**

**And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped." – 20:24**

That we might learn the virtue of trusting God in a time of crisis, the Spirit informs us that not only did the Hebrew army arrive at a battle field of slain corpses, it took three days to gather the spoil and to carry back the wealth to Jerusalem.

# 17. Esther 4:14

## Human Choice v. Divine Providence

**"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"**

Neither the name "*God*" or "*LORD*" is mentioned in the Book of Esther. How did it ever make it into the canon of Scripture?

Though the name of the Lord is not mentioned in the book, His finger prints are on every page of this story.

Thus, Esther is a study on divine providence and God's sovereignty in the stormy world of politics. Note the sudden political reversals in this account that demonstrate the sovereignty of God:

- Esther replaces Vashti as Queen.
- Mordecai exposes the plot of two court officers to assassinate the king.
- The assassination is exposed and the conspirators are hung.
- The king appoint Haman the Agagite-Amalekite to Secretary of Internal Affairs.
- The king orders his subject to bow before Haman, Mordecai refuses.
- Enraged, Haman issues an executive order to kill all Jews.
- The king has a dream. Wakes up. Orders a search of Persian Chronicles and discovers Mordecai was never compensated for his loyalty.
- Haman plans to make request for Mordecai to be hung. Gallows are built.
- The king orders Haman to honor Mordecai for his loyalty.
- Esther plans her appeal and begs the king for her life and the life of her people.
- Enraged, King Xerxes arrests Haman and orders his execution.
- Haman is hanged on the gallows he built to hang Mordecai.
- Instead of being executed, the Jews are ordered to defend themselves.
- The Jews survive and their enemies die.
- Mordecai replaces Haman as Cabinet Secretary and the kingdom prospers.

- Instead of being defeated and humiliated, the Jews thrive under the rule of Mordecai.
- The confusion and mourning in the city of Susa turns to joy!

Did you see the "hidden hand" in this book? The wind that bends the grass? The shadow that steers the ship? If so, you have seen His sovereign providence in action.

# 18. Job 5:12

**"He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong."**

This gem of wisdom comes from Eliphaz who suspects a hidden fault in the life of Job.

A keen observer of human character, this text announces the sovereignty of God in the arena of politics and the market place.

The word "*devices*" (machashabah) refers to a man's thoughts, plans, and intentions.

The word "*disappoint*" (parar) means "to frustrate."

The word "*crafty*" (arum) is translated "naked" and "subtle' in Genesis – a reference to the trickery of the serpent; that is God frustrates the naked designs of evil men on the street and in politics so they have no effect on his eternal purpose.

The word "*enterprise*" (tuwshiyah) refers to something substantial or solid. The use of this term informs us that the well drafted plans of the worldly wise man are vain and useless.

"*He taketh*" is translated "wind" and "turn." -- a reference to the work of divine providence to quickly frustrate, confuse, and "break headlong" the plans of kings and generals. So effective is God's nullifying work that the next few verses describe these captains as blind men groping in the darkness at noon day.

Political shysters are the most frustrated people on earth because they can't get their will accomplished. The fact that monarchs cannot carry out all their evil plans becomes another proof of God's sovereignty in action.

Note: if there is a problem with this text it is because Eliphaz misapplied the principle insinuating that Job was secretly among the deceivers whom God frustrates.

# 19. Job 12:10, 13-14

## In His Hand

**"In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind . . . With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening."**

At the time of Job's horrific suffering, he found himself in a debate with three Arminian minds that believed men had to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, and if they were suffering it was because humans made the wrong choices in life.

Job dissented, but he did agree with the premise that all things are under God's control; that He acts in the clock of time to save and destroy; that man is powerless to prevent His crushing judgments or repair what He destroys with out His permission and aide.

With his theology grounded on the sovereignty of God, Job claimed the Lord had disposition over the souls of mankind. And, this was His conflict. If God loves me and controls all things, why is He allowing me to suffer so.

Paul held to the belief, "in Him we live, move, and have our being."

In his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Jonathan Edwards' taught God holds sinners over the fires of Hell in the same way a mischievous boy holds a spider over a fire . . . that the miscreants are powerless to escape God's prisons.

In the course of life, men face two problems: (1) they don't know what to do; and, (2) they know what to do, but don't have the power to do it. But, God? He knows what to do (wisdom), and he has the power to do it (strength). He knows what works (counsel) and why it works (understanding). Though His infinite and unsearchable wisdom descends to the deepest sea and ascends to the highest stars, He is the fountain of all blessing and the river that delivers it to the fields of men.

What God ruins, no man can restore! Whether He breaks the Tower of Babel, Sodom, Thebes, or Tyre, who can rebuild it to its former glory?

The doors that God shuts, no man can open! Whether it be a government prison, chains and fetters of sin, the Gates of Eden, the cycle of poverty, the unyielding grave, the doors of heaven or the doors of hell, who can open it? (Psalms 88:8; Psalms 142:7; John 11:43; Matthew 25:10-13; Genesis 3:23 Genesis 3:24; Luke 16:26).

# 20. Job 42:2

## Irresistible Power

**"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."**

Job's Arminian friends believed "*whoever perished, being innocent?*" (4:7).

Job dueled with these miserable comforters by employing an argument grounded in the sovereignty of God . . . but in so doing he wrestled with why would a loving, sovereign God would treat Him so harshly?

He ended this wrestling match with God confessing, "*I know that you can do all things.*"

Job did **not** start his ordeal with the words, "*I know that you can do all things*." He gained this knowledge in the final lap of his marathon.

God appointed Job's crushing trials not to punish him, but to test him; not to make him bitter, but to make him better; not to make him afraid, but to release him from fear; not to hurt the man, but to help him go deeper into the mysteries of God.

Job's trial tested him while exposing his strengths and weaknesses; but these tests also brought him closer to the knowledge of God.

In his affliction, Job grew smaller, and the Lord grew larger; the ways of God grew clearer; and Job became wiser.

Job never learned why he was suffering, nor did God teach him about His many attributes.

Rather, Job learned that God can do anything and everything; that none of His thoughts or purposes can be overturned by the genius of men. Try as they may the powerbrokers of this world cannot frustrate the will of God. But, He can and does frustrate the plans of men.

Job's losses and confusion teach us that his suffering was not the result of his individual sin, but that his pain was appointed by God to perfect him. Nothing that happened to this saint was by accident. God controlled the thermostat in Job's furnace of affliction and he was better for it.

Like Job's friends we are too eager to praise God for triumphs and to blame others for their troubles . . . even to blame ourselves for our blunders. God proposes and God disposes. He creates the good we enjoy; and the bitters must be approved by Him.

# 21. Psalm 2:4-5

## Frustrated Rulers

**"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."**

Have you ever noticed the hubris and arrogance of politicians?

This text is the Lord's response to proud kings planning to revolt against God's authority. Viewing the devices of men, we see an aerial view of God looking down with mingled scorn and wrath on fruitless attempts of heathen rulers huffing and puffing against His sovereign purposes.

All politicians boast they understand the questions of the day and have the solution to man's vexing conflicts. The problem is that none of them have the answers to neither man's pesky problems nor do they have the power to disentangle the knots created by their abrasive policies.

After taking a vote to overthrow God's law-order, the Lord laughs at their grand scheme and puny power.

The term "*laugh*" means "to be amused," "play," or "sport;" i.e. God is not only amused at the boldness of world leaders, He mocks them to shame. He is the spotlight that follows these creatures of darkness into an empty room.

# 22. Psalm 10:16

## For Ever and Ever

**"The Lord is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land"**

Have you ever asked yourself "Where is God when I need him?"

Psalm 10 is an acrostic psalm dealing with the hard truth that God hides himself: "*Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"*

Every religion, including Christianity, must deal with the hiding of God. Where is God when I need Him?

After wrestling with the success of the wicked, the "*The Lord is King forever and ever*" (10:16) comes into focus; but, this is not where the psalmist started his spiritual journey.

In the beginning, he thought man-ruled over the affairs of men and the solution to the political madness of his day was better governments . . . even a regime change. Thus, Psalm 10 shows us the growth of the man in his spiritual thinking.

The delight of the church is that God is with her; "*Lo, I am with you even until the end of the age."* But, it is better than this. Each Christian has the Spirit of God living with in Him -1 Peter 3:15.

But, no one is so miserable as the child who feels like God has forsaken Him and that He is nowhere to be found.

God is supposed to be a "*very present help in the time of trouble,"* but often more scarce than drinking water in Death Valley. His presence is a great joy for the people of God, but nothing is more troubling than an eclipse of His presence.

The psalmist has a groan in his gut thinking about wicked politicians:

> *"In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised." (10:2).*

It is much too simple to say that everything good comes from God and everything bad comes from man. The discerning recognize *evil* presents itself *as a genial person feigning to be just.* Moreover, goodness from God often arrives in humble packages.

The wicked do not wear a sign on their chest that says, "I am wicked;" rather, they carry signs that read, "Feminists," "Free love," "Be a Democrat," "Women's

Rights," "I LUV LGBT," "No One is Illegal," "Pro-Choice," "Socialism Sign up Here," "Support the Extinction of Old White Men," etc.

The Psalmist wishes his antagonists would be exposed, humbled, and trapped in their own snare.

The psalmist progresses in his prayer from one of feeling forsaken to a feeling of confidence that God has heard his prayer; from feeling like his Commander was absent in the battle, to an understanding that God is a competent King actively saving His people from their enemies.

**16 The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land.**

Let us remember that the LORD is King. He rules over all – over all rulers, presidents, parliaments, and bureaucracies; over the good and bad of politics; over the beginning and end of war.

All heads of state are required to acknowledge His reign and surrender to His authority. Where are the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Edomites? Where is the Mongol Empire . . . the Spanish Empire . . . the Japanese Empire . . . the British Empire . . . the United States Empire? When the nations act in rebellion against His will, the heavy hand of God moves against them – "*the nations perish from his land.*"

> *Exodus 15:3-4 The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.*
>
> *Exodus 15:19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.*

It was the gospel of "*another king, Jesus*" that turned the world upside down, and it is the preaching of this gospel that will turn the world right side up (Acts 17:6-7; Psalm 2, 97, 110).

# 23. Psalm 33:9-10

## Foiled Again

**"For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect."**

This psalm begins with a Piel imperative (Intensive):"*Be glad in the Lord*" (33:1). Gladness appears to be in short supply because most people have the temperament of a horsefly.

However, this psalm provides spiritual reasons to be glad.

"*He spake and it was done*" (33:9) refers to the works of God during the creation of heaven and earth. The Hebrew expresses it better: "*He spoke, and it was*." Things that have no power to create themselves. No one is self-born.

> *"That is, its existence depended on his word; the universe sprang into being at his command; he had only to speak, and it arose in all its grandeur where before there was nothing" (Barnes).*

The world we observe today is NOT the result of billions of years of ultra-positive evolutionary micro-changes, but the result of words spoken by the Creator during the six days of creation. Man did not begin by two rocks bumping hips. No one can determine to grow a third arm or have an eye in the back of their head. We are products of His special creation.

> "What a pity it is that this earth, which is so full of the proofs and instances of God's goodness, should be so empty of his praises" - Matthew Henry).

**33:10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.**

This text moves from God's work of creation, to his work of Providence; from His power over atoms and mindless things, to His power over rational, volitional creatures.

Though nations unite to employ their global agenda, our Lord frustrates their plans and defeats them as He pleases.

His purpose of judgment for the wicked and for the good of His people are irresistible. Unlike men, our Lord is never frustrated. He not only knows what to do; He has the power to do it.

The evening news is not so much about what officials accomplished but about what they were not able to accomplish.

It is a good thing politicians don't live up to their promises, otherwise, the country would be ruined.

The application of this chapter is to all nations (33:11-12) whose God is the LORD and not limited to those ancient people living within the borders of Palestine. Like all people need water to drink, all people need the Lord Jesus Christ to satisfy the thirst for eternal life within their souls.

# 24. Psalm 37:1-3

## Mowed Down

**"Fret not thyself because of evildoers . . . For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."**

Righteous people are concerned about the runaway train of politics on a track of madness especially the policy to decriminalize infanticide.

Mainstream media treats abortion as a right of women. Alternative media personalities bark out commands to the public that they must do something about social problems . . . anything: listen, learn, vote, write, protest, jump up and down, scream and shout. The message is that man is in control and men must elected better leaders.

In fact, it is a mark of a good Christian to be burdened down by abortion, homosexuality, gun violence, sex change surgeries, and other degradations. But, this chapter tells us to STOP FRETTING ABOUT ABORTION . . . WARS . . . and GUN VIOLENCE. This psalm takes the believer in another direction.

**Psalm 37:1 Fret not thyself (tit'har) because of evildoers (ra'im), neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.**

"*Fret not thyself*" is a reflexive verb which prohibits God's man from fueling his anger by stoking the fire with reports about what the *ra'im* are doing.

Believers know they should not fret, but they do. They fret because they do not rest on the bed of God's Sovereign's promises; that is, they have not found the grounds on which to live a worry-free, fret-free life.

**You can stop fretting by growing in the knowledge of God.**

***First, know that it is God's job to judge the wicked;***

Our sovereign Lord separates night from day, the husks from the corn, the goats from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, and the wicked from among the righteous. We have a duty to remove the leaven from our own lives, but He has given us **NO duty or power** to remove malice or evil in society. Our purpose on earth is not to change the world, but to respond to it correctly.

***Second, know that God has promised to judge the wicked.***

**2 For the wicked shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. . . . 9 For evildoers shall be cut off . . . 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow . . 5 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. . . . 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: . . . 20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: 28 . . . but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.**

***Third, know that God is removing the wicked from society NOW!***

**28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.**

The "*seed*" here refers to the babies, children, and families of the wicked – of fornicators, adulterers, and other classes of degenerates.

Moreover, the world doesn't need a second, third, fourth generation of paillards scurrying through the streets like garbage pail dogs reproducing more bas**d children.

> *Psalm 21:10 Their **fruit** shalt thou destroy from the earth, and **their seed from among the children of men**.*

Fourth, know that God uses the wicked to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about abortion. God uses wicked abortion "doctors" to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed (babies, children, offspring) of the wicked -- promiscuous fornicators and adulterers in Hollywood, NYC, Chicago, London, Berlin, Paris, and the inner cities.

-Stop fretting about war and the casualties of war. God is using war to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about gun violence in Chicago. God is using gun violence to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about vaccine injuries and deaths. God is using the vax jabs to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about child sex-change operations. God is using these monstrous procedures to sterilize the children of the wicked in order to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about the elite's plan to reduce the world population by billions. God is using these wicked schemers to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

Open your eyes and see. God is using the wicked to cut off the seed of the wicked.

Fret not!

Rest, soul, rest!

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Note: Psalm 37:28 should not be used to label grieving parents who have lost children and to judge them as wicked. Psalm 37:28 is a general promise that should encourage us, but not empower us to sit as judges on specific persons and their trying circumstances and then to conclude they must be evil. God forbid!

# 25. Psalm 46:8-10

## Be Still and Know that I am God

**Something to Behold and Believe**

**8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.**

Soldiers dead! Corpses everywhere! Chariots and supplies abandoned, the nation became street-hawking evangelists: "*Come, behold the works of the Lord*!" That is, this is the psalmist's invitation to come and share in the lessons they learned after the great victory over the Assyrians during the days of Hezekiah.

"*Desolations*" refers to the crushing of Sennacherib's troops and the plague of death that decimated the Assyrian army.

**9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.**

"*He maketh wars to cease*" refers to the sudden end of the Assyrian campaign against Judah.

Breaking the bow and burning the chariot with fire refers to the wings of death and destruction that smashed the Assyrians when they entered the killing fields of the Lion of Judah.

Likewise, the Lord frustrates the plans of generals. A strange force is at work preventing war hawks from launching nuclear strikes. Look and see. Hear and learn. He crushes cynical ambitions for war in our day.

Threaten His lambs, and you are a dead man!

**10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.**

The main application of the psalm is wrapped up in two verbs: "***Be still***, and ***know*** *that I am God*" -- a difficult command for the hyperconcerned Christian.

The Hebrew Hiphil imperative verb is causative; that is, take steps to calm yourself . . . *to be still . . . to be quiet*. There are times when we are not permitted to exercise "freedom of speech" or to run around in a panic waving our hands and crying out for Christians to do something . . . anything . . . to do more . . . to pray more . . . to write more . . . to vote more. . . . more, more, more. Our hope must be in God, not the nervous activity of religious zealots.

Hezekiah ordered the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be silent. The people were not permitted to speak a word during the Assyrian siege. Every tongue begged to

be free of the king's order and to blather about the size of the Assyrian army, to complain about personal discomforts, and to share fear with anyone who would listen.

> *"But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, "Do not answer him." (Isaiah 36:21)*

What wisdom by Hezekiah! So much for absolute freedom of speech.

**The first discipline** we must learn when facing adversaries is to *"Be still!"*

The Spirit of God instructs His people: when you face problems bigger than you . . . "*Be still in your spirit . . . and practice the discipline of silence*."

The word "*be still*" (*raphah*) means "to cast down, to sink, to relax, or to abandon" a course. It is translated "*idyle*" in Exodus 5:8; "*forsake*" in Deuteronomy 4:31; and "*let alone*" in Deuteronomy 9:14. Compare with Exodus 14:13, "*Stand still, and see the salvation of God*."

We live in a world of noise, chatter, commercials, causes, protests and sirens where peace and quiet is a treasured commodity.

Many of us are "go getters." Nervous energy burns within the furnace of our concerns. We have difficulty learning the discipline of being still. Our impatient voice mutters, "Are we there yet?"

"*Being still*" is not merely external, but an internal state where a man can hear the voice of God. Hearing the voice of God is not to be taken "literally." Rather, the phrase refers to a soul finding rest by believing the Holy Scriptures.

**The second discipline** follows the first. The purpose of being still is so a person can know God.

In every age, the most spiritual among us seek mp and the knowledge of God. It was the key in Habakkuk's day:

> *"But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Habakkuk 2:20).*

During "*Compline*" (9:00 PM) Orthodox monks take time for personal prayer and meditation. Speaking is strictly forbidden.

Some problems are bigger than the man, bigger than the family, and bigger than the nation. Silence with a trust in God is the need of the hour.

When facing giants, we need to abandon worry and ponder the power of God. "*Know*" the Lord Jesus Christ is God . . . enthroned at the right hand of the Father . . . having all authority and power "to crush Satan under your feet" (Matthew 28:18; Romans 16:20).

Knowing God means to know that God is God, and that we are not in charge of the universe. We are not in control. We are not in command, and therefore we do not need to be giving orders to others! The Spirit calls us to rest and harness all nervous energy erupting from the inferno of our anxiety. Our need is to arrange ourselves under His authority, His will, and His law — **not** to act like a general ordering subordinates to do something.

***"I will be exalted in the earth."***

Your battle may not be about you, but about God being exalted (Heb: *rum* = lifted up - Genesis 14:22) among the nations.

> *"I will defend this city and save Jerusalem for my sake and for the sake of David my servant!" (Isaiah 37:35).*

In this case, God did not help those who helped themselves. They were not permitted to engage the enemy with swords and spears. God did all the work.

The final vision of history is not one where Satan wins by enslaving every man to vices rooted in darkness. Rather, the Prophet Habakkuk informs us . . .

> *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).*

History is **not** going around in circles. It is headed toward the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. I will be exalted in the earth infers the conversion of the Gentiles by the gospel of Christ:

> *"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11:15.*

When His glory is at stake, we know the battle is won. He is reigning now. He will defeat all His enemies! Our duty is "*to be still*" and *"to know:* that God will defend His honor and deliver His people.

Sometimes we have to "let go" and "let God" engage the enemy. He does not need our counsels or nervous energy feeling like we have to do something . . . anything. Further, He does not need the wheels of government to accomplish His purposes:

> *"Behold, the nations* are *as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing." (Isaiah 40:15)*

In these global developments there is little a single patriot can do to deter the anti-God forces. Huge headaches call us to forsake complaining and to trust God . . . to forsake the harvest of our anxiety . . . to diligently know that the risen Christ is our Commander . . . that He is in control of all the events of history.

Do **not** hear what is not being said. The Spirit is **not** encouraging irresponsibility or telling us to despise duty. Many of our personal problems can be resolved through prayer, planning, and perseverance in doing good.

Remember what Robert E. Lee told his son, "Do your duty in all things. You can't do more, and you should never wish to do less."

But, when the problem is bigger than the man, it is time to practice the discipline of "*being still*" -- *to know that God is God* . . . that He is our Refuge and Present Help in the time of trouble. . . . that He will be exalted among the nations!

# 26. Psalm 76:6-7

## God's Trance

**6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.**

Chariots and horses on those ancient battlefields was like an infantry facing a German Leopard Tank with sticks and stones.

God did not stop the Assyrian meat grinder from leaving Ninevah, or stop them on the battlefields of Phoenicia, Syria, Egypt, or Moab.

But, when they came to the gates of Jerusalem and the killing fields of the Lion of Judah, the sovereign LORD God of Israel issued His command. Enough!

While the Lord uses armies to crush the wicked, He has a way of putting advancing armies into a trance causing them to sleep. He silences adversaries, halts death marches, creates delirium, and causes them to lanquor in their plans for destruction.

Like the Egyptian charioteers were buried at the Red Sea, Assyrian corpses littered the treed landscape around Jerusalem like masses of poisoned ants.

When secular man seems to have gained the upper hand in the battle between good and evil, the Christian must remember that God is sovereign and that the wicked are crusched like crackers under His feet.

He rebukes generals and causes armies to hibernate. He prevents trigger-happy warmongers from launching Intercontinental ballistic missiles, atacms, and AGMs at civilians.

**7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?**

There is a classic riddle that asks, "What is black and blue and red all over?" In our mind appears the loser of an Irish bare knuckle street fight.

What is the answer to the question, "*Who may stand when once Thou art angry?*" The only fitting answer is . . . "*No one*!"

The pronoun "*Thou*" is used twice in the Hebrew making it emphatic: "*Thou, even Thou, O Lord, are to be feared!*" We must learn not to fear man, but to fear Christ; not to fear the condemnation of government, but to fear the condemnation of God.

> Barnes: The repetition of the word "thou" is emphatic, as if the mind paused at the mention of God, and remained in a state of reverence, repeating the thought.

This same thought is found in Luke 12:5.

> Luke 12:5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

Men miss the mark publishing how great evil has become in society instead of how great "God is in the generation of the righteous" (Psalm 14:5); and, they want the same politicians who broke it to fix it.

Instead of slogging through the swamp of despair in the dark everglades of politics, Christians are called to travel the highway of restfulness illuminated by the promises of God.

Instead of focusing on the muscle-mass of swamp critters, let us gaze at the authority and power of the Lion of Judah Who commands victories for Jacob in His killing fields (Psalm 44:4).

Considering the might of the enemy instead of contemplating the historical conquests of Christ does nothing to increase confidence associated with faith. Faith does **not** lead to victory; faith **IS** the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

> *"Now faith IS the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).*

God is more interested in our study of Him than in our assessment of the strength of our opponents. Declaring the might of the enemy is to have more faith in the enemy than in the power of Christ!

To fear the wicked is to have more faith in man than in Christ. The only fear permitted in the Christian-life is fear of Him who has the power to cast into hell (Luke 12:5).

God limits the power of the wicked (v. 10); unbelief blinds men to the power of God. Believe God and be calm; rest, and let the wind fill the sails. Watch what He does in your silence.

The reason for this fear is the anger of God -- an ominous virtue that demands expression against the unrighteousness of man.

Study God. Know God. Believe God. Rest in God.

Figuratively speaking, those who challenge His authority will end up "being black and blue and red all over."

# 27. Psalm 76:10

## The Great Restrainer

**"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."**

The background of this psalm is the Assyrian Invasion of Judah during the time of Hezekiah and the nightmare (sudden death) of the Assyrian army (Isaiah 37-39). Thus, this psalm highlights the lessons of God's deliverance.

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Which of us hasn't felt utterly exasperated after listening to the evening news?

The world is dangerously over populated with reporters that slant the news around their godless agenda and politicians that act like a little puppy trying to follow four kids at the same time.

The depravity of politicians seems to have no boundaries. In Western countries, psychopaths hold offices of power. We know there is a limit to intelligence, but there doesn't seem to be a limit to the madness of corruptocrats with squirrels in the attic.

> "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." (Albert Einstein)
>
> "Power is okay, and stupidity is usually harmless. Power and stupidity together are dangerous". (Patrick Rothfuss, The Name of the Wind)
>
> "Never argue with stupid people, they will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience." (Mark Twain)

Is there an anchor for the soul that can keep us together while moonbats captain the ship?

The conjunction "*surely*" announces the main lesson of the psalm—a detail about the sovereignty of God, that if grasped, can cause us to experience calm in the midst of dark, thundering political storms. Surely, God turns the ire of iniquitous men to fulfill His purpose; and, restrains the rest.

The phrase "*wrath of man*" refers to the vigorous, imperial ambitions of politicians.

Not all psychopaths are behind bars. Maniacs are in power and hold key positions in the apparatus of government. Madmen run for office. Voting fails. Money talks. Justice breaks. The status quo in the hands of unaccountable

bureaucrats makes ordinary citizens feel as helpless as ants to stop the elephant stampede of lunacy thundering across the land.

*"shall praise thee:"* Ellicott says,

> "Possibly we should render, 'and those who remain from their wrath shall celebrate a festival,' since the suggested emendation is the word used in that sense."

The Cambridge Bible adds,

> "All rebellion against God's will must in the end redound to God's glory: it serves to set His sovereignty in a clearer light" (Exodus 9:16).

The Pulpit Commentary considers man's wrath

> "shall give occasion for great deeds on God's part - deeds which will bring him praise and honour."

The word *"restrain"* in Hebrew means "to fasten one's belt" or "to gird" with a sash (Exodus 12:11; 29:9). God restrains these nutcases. Like guard dogs, they are on a leash.

> Benson: "thou shalt put it on as an ornament, which the girdle was; thou shalt adorn thyself with it as a conqueror adorns himself with the spoils of his enemies."
>
> Barnes: "It is not that there was anything in the wrath itself, or in their plans or intentions, that was in itself "adapted" to honor God; but that it was overruled by him, so that he took "occasion" from it to display his own character."

In his battle against herisiarches in Ephesus, Timothy faced "*madmen*" (*anoia*) like the sorcerers, Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians. See 2 Timothy 3:9-10. In this passage Paul assures his son in the faith "*they will make no further progress;*" that is, there is a limit to what these lunatics can accomplish because God restrains them.

**The great question** for the godly is, "How much evil must these tyrants do before God shackles them?"

**The great answer** is, "just enough;" that is, these belligerents are not capable of carrying out all their wicked schemes against innocent people. God limits the plans of those intent on world dominion.

The term "*remainder of wrath*" refers to the frustrated ambitions of kings and generals — evil plans they cannot initiate — cannot mandate -- schemes and dreams that are precluded from executing by the Lord while they are in office.

The trusting Christian is not in a panic because he knows that God has these devils on a chain. These criminals that appear to be unrestrained in their folly will be used for the glory and praise of God.

The problem with man is not something from without, but from within.

> *Jeremiah 17:9 "the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?"*

What man knows the depth of his own wickedness? No man is as evil as he can be because God restrains evil.

And in our story, the might of Sennacherib and his army fell as corpses in that ancient theater in order to demonstrate the crushing, bone-breaking power of the Lion of Judah.

The invasion of the Assyrians to Jerusalem and their stunning slaughter resulted in praise to the LORD; their retreat from Jerusalem demonstrated how God restrains the wrath of man.

> The good news for Americans is that all politicians don't get elected.
>
> It is a good thing that elected politicians don't live up to their promises. If they did the country would be ruined.

# 28. Psalm 91

## The Invisible Shield

This remarkable hymn has profound claims and extraordinary promises – promises that only a sovereign, all-powerful Potentate can fulfill -- promises that only Christ-lovers, cross-carriers, and covenant-keepers can feel and appreciate.

This psalm is not for light-weights, but heavy-weights in the faith. No chaplain in the army could preach this psalm unless he stands on the rock of God's sovereignty.

War is the result of politics by other means. Political warfare is the use of political force to compel an opponent to do another nation's will based on hostile intent.

One should avoid looking at the psalm casually or linearly. A psalm quoted by our Lord, it deserves our deepest consideration, profound reflection, and sincere devotion.

David is credited with writing this Psalm; that is, its inspired content was written by a man who experienced the horrors of the battlefield . . . but, it is relevant for every Christian as it expresses the work of salvation at work in the man who has filed his domicile in the kingdom of God.

**The Old Veteran States His Confidence.**

**1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High (apodasis) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (protasis).**

The old Veteran states the major lesson he learned in his fighting career: How to survive on the battlefield in deadly clashes against enemy troops.

This marvelous promise "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (the apodosis) is conditioned upon whether one "*dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*" (the protasis). It is not a promise to resident aliens visiting with a "green card" sleeping in the barracks with citizens of the kingdom.

This is no minor promise nor fluky condition.

The word "*dwelleth*" (*yashab*) refers to the Christian-soldier who pitches his tent under the shadow of the Almighty. Not for a short time during a bloody battle as spiritual life-insurance, but as his personal dwelling, his permanent residence, his homestead for life as a de jure kingdom citizen. Many soldiers like to take leave and visit Satan's Yum Yum palace, but this soldier separated

himself from these pleasures in order to enjoy feeling the heartbeat of God under His wings in and off the battlefield.

The denomination "*Almighty*" comes from the Hebrew word "*El Shaddai*" (*shadday*). The term "*Shaddai*" is found in Genesis 17:1 -- a cognate title derived from a term referencing a man's muscular shoulder-chest -- an icon of strength and power.

The title "*Most High*" (*Elon or El-yone*) means "*highest*" or "*most high*" -- a reference to the Supreme Commander of the Universe. A man will receive many orders from de facto authorities during this pilgrimage on earth, but this man listened for the orders of the Supreme Commander of the Universe in and off the battlefield. That is, not only does this soldier submit to his Captain in battle, but he is under the authority of the LORD during peace time for the whole of life.

Because he is in God's kingdom and enjoys the life of the kingdom, he can afford to take risks. He has embraced death as part of God's will. If it be God's will for him to die as a hero on the front line of conflict, he knows that he has a permanent home with his Commander and Chief in Paradise.

**The Young Soldier Hears and Answers:**

**2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.**

Based on the precious promise in verse one, the instructed soldier makes a wholehearted commitment to the LORD God: "*He is my refuge and my fortress*" on the battlefield and off the battlefield; in war and in peacetime; in sickness and in health, in riches or in poverty . . .

Peter expressed it this way: "*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts . . .* " (1 Peter 3:15).

**The Old Veteran Pledges the LORD's Protection**

**3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.**

The experienced soldier brags about the LORD and shares his confidence to the new recruit that God will save this young marine from the fowler's snare (enemy traps).

The adjective "*noisome*" refers to the covetous "desire" and the "engulfing strategies" of the enemy to capture and kill him.

The "*fowler*" refers to muscular enemies, scammers, and scheming politicians that seek to enslave the man and to plunder his assets (Exodus 10:17).

The term "*pestilence*" refers to diseases, plagues, epidemics, infirmities, and battlefield tragedies. This soldier is not refusing medical assistance. Rather, he places his confidence in the sure promises of God rather than in the flaky promises of man.

Limitations: All the promises in this chorus belong to the *el-gibbor* (male soldier) who has made application to King Jesus for permanent domicile in the kingdom of God (shadow of his wings). These promises do not apply to nominal Christians or antinomians. They do not apply to women who put on the clothing of an *el--gibbor* (soldier). They belong to men (and women) who have surrendered their all-an-all to the Lord Jesus with a commitment to live under His law-order and his plan for men and for women. Rebels need not apply; that is, these promises are not relevant to the autonomous sheep committed to live life "his *way*" or "*her way*" (Isaiah 53:6).

**4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy (big) shield and buckler (small shield).**

The protection of Almighty God is compared to (a) a mother hen that shelters her chicks under her wings, and (b) to the soldier's shield and spear. The LORD is tough and tender; a gentle Savior for His helpless chicks, and an iron-fisted, Sherman tank to his enemies.

**5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;**

Enemies attack during the day when one is awake, and at night when one is asleep.

The seasoned veteran shores up the promise in verse one with more assurances applicable to young soldiers headed toward the bloody battlefield.

The terrors of the day would include attacks of advancing armies you can see; and, the terrors of the night would include cold, savage, death-raids under the cover of darkness; threats from the enemy during a battle, and the propaganda of the enemies while at rest; overt and covert operations.

The soldier under the shadow of His wings fears neither the terrors of the day, nor the horrors of the night.

**6 Nor for the pestilence (plagues) that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.**

If not facing enemies, the soldier has to deal with germ warfare, disease, contamination, and infection in the course of duty.

The term "*destruction that wasteth*" refers to "separation," a "cutting," or severing of arm and limb in the course of battle. Swords cut. A friend of God is not only protected, but he has superior weapons to employ against adversaries.

**7 A thousand (Aleph = 1000) shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.**

Hand-to-hand combat is a life and death struggle. In war, men die. The old combat soldier assures the trusting trooper that the mortal dangers of battle shall not "come near thee." While he has to be in the conflict as duty requires, the promise contains special protection.

**8 Only with thine eyes (rak ayin) shalt thou behold (nabat) and see (ra'ah) the reward of the wicked.**

Assurances continue: without terror or danger to thyself, you shall see the "reward" of the wicked -- defeat, humiliation, wounding, dismemberment, and crushed bones of men opposing the armies of God.

"*Only with thine eyes*" (*rak ayin*) is in the emphatic position in this sentence. You shall see the wicked shattered, but that evil shall not touch the one sheltered under the Shadow of His wings. You will see others fall, but the danger shall not come near you.

The word "*reward*" (*shil'lumah*) refers "to acquittal" or "retribution."

There are two words used for perception: "*behold* (nabat) *and see* (*ra'ah*)."

The adverb "*Only*" means "only, altogether, and surely;" it limits the verb. Some sins are judged in now-time, and other sins are judged in eternity (1 Timothy 5:24). Look for it. Perceive it. Discern it.

**9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.**

The old soldier reminds the young warrior that these assurances are not for every soldier, but ONLY for the GI who makes the LORD his permanent defense and refuge.

The term "*evil*" does not refer to sin or moral transgression, but to the complex troubles and distresses of war.

The soldier that makes the LORD his shield and buckler can expect to be delivered in a battle from death because God manages all his earthly concerns. Those that know God are immortal until their work is done.

This passage does not deny life's paradoxes: A man may die young satisfied with life while the wicked man may not have enjoyed a single day of happiness in his long life.

This psalm does not say the Christian soldier will not have nights without sleep or days without hardship. The general promise is for protection from destructive forces on the gridiron of conflict.

Because we do not fully understand God's goodness nor His providence, we can become confused when expectation miscarry toward specific individuals. In other words, we must go deeper into trust when we can't explain Providence.

**Angel in the clouds on blue sky**

**11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.**

This text is often used to address the subject of guardian angels, and rightly so. The soldier leaning on the everlasting arms can expect angels to come to his rescue (Acts 12).

Note: Satan quoted this verse "out of context" to Jesus when he challenged our Lord to jump off the pinnacle of the temple . . . but, Jesus put the promise in the proper context saying, "*It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;"* that is, these promises are not for self-willed, presumptuous men living recklessly. But, only for those soldiers that "*dwell in the secret place of the most high*" (91:1) making the "*Most High their habitation*" (1:9).

**12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.**

"*in thy hands*" alludes to the tender care of a nurse carrying a baby in the palm of her hands.

"*dash thy foot*" against a stone refers to unseen, debilitating dangers due to the battle's terrain.

**13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder (cobra): the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.**

The *lion* and *cobra* are icons depicting dangerous attackers with lion-like powers and poison-like teeth. Lions can tear people to pieces; and cobras strike with deadly toxins in their fangs. Yet, none of these pernicious creatures with all their claws and venom can touch the God-seeker until his work is done. With the power of God, he can tame the lion and defang the cobra.

As a way of application, let us remember the time the disciples came back from their mission stating enthusiastically, *"Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."*

Jesus replied,

> *"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19)*

**The LORD Confirms the Old Veteran's Pledge of Protection**

**14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.**

We have another abrupt change in person. God speaks! God does not speak "*to him*" (the young soldier) but "*about the trusting one.*"

The first voice said of himself, '*I will trust*'; the second voice addresses that speaker, and says, '*Thou shalt not be afraid*'; the third voice speaks of him, and not to him, and says, 'Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him" (MacLaren).

These promises are phenomenal and beyond ordinary understanding because they are other-worldly. Even God-fearing men need Divine certification of the remarkable promises to empower soldiers of the cross to separate themselves from the bombastic drums of doubts blasting from carnal theaters that men can see and hear; and, to confidently purchase a ticket to heaven's opera to hear the assurances of singing angels that only faith can appreciate.

The conjunction "*because*" supplies the foundation of this confidence; that is, he is protected because he knows my name. The word "*know*" (*yada*) does not mean "to be informed" or "to know about" or to "possess knowledge of." The term "*yada*" implies knowing God personally in an intimate, experiential way. It is not about what a man claims. He may claim to know God, but the real question is does God know the man and recognize him a member of His flock (John 10:27).

This psalm ends with Divine confirmation of the old veteran's promise that the soldier who dwells near God's chapel shall be delivered in war; that is, God notarizes the old soldier's wisdom and verifies it with His spoken Word.

**15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.**

War is full of distress, but God assures the young soldier that in his personal emergency and cries for help that "*I will be with him in trouble*" to deliver him.

**16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.**

The psalm ends with God's promise that the trusting soldier will not only survive, but thrive; that he will not only be supplied, but satisfied; and that he will not only have inspiration, but salvation; that the one who fears God can also enjoy Him; that the gospel not only promises eternal salvation from eternal enemies, but a measure of temporal salvation from earthly enemies.

# 29. Psalm 97

## The Old Testament Gospel

## "The Lord Reigns"

Before us is the gospel from an Old Testament (OT) perspective. What was the OT gospel and what is the language of proclamation? Since there is only one gospel, it behooves the Bible student to understand its OT presentment in order to expand one's understanding of that glorious message.

**The Gospel of God's Reign**

**Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.**

Before us is the heart of the gospel: "*the Lord reigneth*."

When is the last time you heard this announcement in the classroom or from the media? You are more likely to hear "we are in power" than God is in power. The human doctrines of "man's choices" (Arminianism) is more popular than the doctrine of God's sovereign elections.

While we take great comfort in our Lord's redemptive work, His core message was "*the kingdom of God has come unto you*" (Matthew 12:28); that is, the central message of Christ was the reign of God (Elohim, Elah, Theos). God's rule entered history in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat man's great enemies: Satan, sin, and death. The good news is that Theos offers men peace with Himself on the grounds of Christ's doing and dying for us.

Paul quoted a verse from Isaiah declaring the excellence of gospel proclamation: "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace*" (Romans 10:15). Paul's quote is from Isaiah 52:7 which says, "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . that saith to Zion, 'Thy God reigneth*!'"

The theme "*the LORD reigneth*" is the crux of the Old Testament gospel; and, the New Testament is simply the grand manifestation of the reign of God in action.

We do not always feel like God reigns. The humanist says,

> "It matters not . . . how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul" (Invictus).

Madmen come to power to steal property under color of law. Murderers and butchers are protected by legislative statutes. Rulers permit monopolies and

bribes for high ranking officials. Government agencies oppress and bully the weak into submission. Disease and death visit every family. Jobs end. Stock markets plunge. Automobiles crash. Wars erupt. Things seem out of control . . . and they are depressing . . . unless, of course, we believe God reigns over all matters in our lives.

Thus, the need of the hour is not more money, more organizations, and more self-esteem, but Christian men who proclaim "*the Lord reigns*" and that His dominions have entered history in and through His Son.

The good news is that Elah reigns over nations, over politics, over weather, over disease and tragedy, over health, and the nasty storms hovering over us. For those who have repented of their rebellion against God's law order and surrender to His authority, His reign brings great joy and comfort.

One great cause of melancholy in our lives, is that we fail to take sufficient comfort from simple, but profound statements in Scripture. "*The LORD reigneth*" is the lightning bolt that brightens up the cloudy skies during the cold, dark nights of our lives.

The verbs "*rejoice*" and "*be glad*" are Hebrew jussives that enjoin all God's people to consider the dominions of our Lord and to join the triumphal procession taking place in Zion, the city of Almighty God, the general assembly of spiritual Israel. The people on vast continents as well as tribes on tiny islands (Pitcairn, Samoa), the great and the small, are urged to take comfort in the Sovereignty of Christ.

Notice that the locus of joy is outside of man and in the Lord's dominions. Joy is **not** connected to introspection, self-esteem, inner optimism, or subconscious exploration. It is **not** coupled with knowledge of self. It is **not** associated with profit in business or a large bank account. This psalm takes us outside of self, outside of our pride, outside of human choices, to the Sovereignty of the Lord God. Rejoice!

*Philippians 4:4* ***Rejoice*** *in the Lord alway: and again I say,* ***Rejoice****.*

**The Gospel of Righteousness**

**2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.**

The reign of God is good news for those who have made their peace with God and surrendered to His law order, but it is not good news for rebels. In fact, it

is rather disturbing for the self-willed, self-governed lawless man hell-bent on self-governance and asset accumulation.

The psalmist takes us back to Mt. Sinai. The clouds and darkness reminds us that the Lord is holy and unapproachable. There is a veiling of His splendor lest man be destroyed. Fire is an instrument of destruction stoked to consume the proud who refuse to acknowledge His supremacy.

If the earth quakes and mountains melt in His presence, how much more should pagans tremble before Sovereignty and Glory.

> "The heavens declare his righteousness . . . His justice in punishing his enemies" - Gill.

**Gospel Instructions to Idolaters**

**7 Confounded be (or be ashamed) all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.**

A better rendering of the original text is as follows: *"Let all be ashamed who serve idols. Worship him all ye gods."* The first statement or jussive serves as a command.

There are two jussives (commands) in this verse informing us of the response the Lord seeks from those outside His fold.

The first jussive is *"confounded"* or *"Be ashamed"* (*buwsh*).

If a person understands *"the Lord reigns"* and that his law is the supreme law, then shame for transgression is the proper response to gospel proclamation.

The term "*serve*" (*abad*) implies a serf relationship to idols.

An "*idol*" implies a source of law and values that one feels obligated to follow. The gospel announces the sinfulness of man and its effects by eating fruit from the poisonous tree. Man is **not** sick; he's a sinner that sins. Shame is the sense of failure and guilt one has because of disobedience to righteous Authority. The proper response to God's reign is fear, trembling, and a deep sense of shame that causes the naked spirit to reach for fig leaves.

Shame is the first spiritual response which people find difficult. Tattoos come to mind. Shouldn't people sporting tattoos (icons of idolatry) be ashamed of their pride and neglect of God's law (Leviticus 19)?

The second jussive is the ONLY reasonable response to the reign of God which is *"worship"* (bow down).

The word "*worship*" is a rare form (Hithpael) and is difficult to translate because the verb is a reflexive action; i.e. the subject is ordered to act on himself. But, the psalmist is not asking men to worship themselves, but Him who reigns. Thus, the verb should be treated as follows: "Fall down! Bow your knee! Focus

your affections on Him. Make yourself the object of the LORD's affection!" Cease your war against Him and surrender to His authority!

He is not calling for sarcedotal worship here but total surrender of the total man to Absolute Sovereignty. This is the Spirit's way of calling rebels to repent and to make peace with Elohim. Since the Lord reigns, the only reasonable, sensible response is acknowledgement of the rule of the Lord God and acceptance of his terms of peace.

Now if "*be ashamed*" and "*bow down before Him*" is the proper response, then the opposite action exposes of the plight of humanity.

All the problems we face as a society are because men have rebelled against God's law order . . . and are **not** ashamed about their pride and immorality; that men believe they are masters of their own fate.

> "May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears"- Nelson Mandela.
>
> "The quality of your life is built on the quality of your decisions"– Wesam Fawzi.
>
> "All of us start from zero. We take the right decision and become a hero"– Govinda.

What is wrong with men that are not ashamed of their ego-driven existence, filthy words, and cursing; of their fornications and adultery; of their scams and schemes and fraud? Further, because men have declared war against God's law order is the reason civilizations need a powerful police force. Is not all the corruption in government a result of men who reject God's law order—officials who do not execute the duties of their office under the eye of His Sovereignty?

Notice the terms "*idols*" and "*gods*." An idol is a fiction, a man-made thing or entity or corporation. The word "*serve*" (*abad*) is the word used of a slave who renders service to his masters. Think of it. People are absolutely in love with fictions and man-made things.

What's wrong with man? Men have time to work, watch sports, dance and drink, take their kids to soccer games, watch TV, eat and sleep. But, they don't have time for God.

"*Worship Him, all ye gods*" could refer to "angels" as K & D suggest, or the term "*gods*" could refer to government officials such as judges and magistrates (Psalm 82:6). He calls "*the gods*" to bow down and worship, but the "*gods*" he is talking about are not "so-called" gods, but proud, arrogant men who see themselves as his own king. After all, Satan said to the first couple, "You shall be as gods;" that is, self-governed, autocratic people.

This text is God's way of calling humanistic man to repent of sin and to surrender to the authority of the living God. The New Testament equivalent of this text is "*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;*" (Matthew 11:29) or, "*If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord*" and "*believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved*" (Romans 10:9); or, "*God now commands all men everywhere to repent*" (Acts 17:30).

**8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.**

The fact that the LORD reigns over all the earth and calls the pagans and infidels from every nation to repent and surrender to the LORD are sweet sounds in Zion. He is not just the God of Israel but of all men and all nations. He is not just the God of the hills but of the valleys, deserts, and seas. He knows the secret counsels of all the kings, frustrates their plans, and executes His will on the earth.

Zion is the community of the redeemed (the heavenly Jerusalem today), and they rejoice in God's reign and His attention to call the rebels to order. The redeemed have repented of their sins and made peace with God on His terms. Because of their deep desire for others to find grace and forgiveness at the foot of the cross (judgments), there is joy for Christians in gospel proclamation.

> "The faithful servants of God may well rejoice and be glad, because he is glorified; and whatever tends to his honour, is his people's pleasure." - Matthew Henry.

**Gospel Instructions to Christians**

**10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.**

Just as the LORD has instructions for the pagans (7-9), God has instructions for believers. Between the two commands He reminds His beloved of the benefit of living under His authority: preservation (eternal life), deliverance, light (increase light and perspective on truth), and gladness.

The first command: "hate evil."

The first command is **not** to "believe in yourself; or "to love your neighbor as yourself;" or, "be all you can be," or "reach your full potential;" *but to hate evil*! Toleration of evil is not Christian. Believers are called to hate fornication, adultery, homosexuality, theft, murder, covetousness, pomposity, disrespect, and idolatry . . . and those who promote vice.

Evil is **not** floating through the air. It is in men! It is **not** like the flu that comes on people for a short time and then leaves.

That believers are *to love the sinner and hate sin* is a modern Evangelical nicety that is anthropologically flawed, practically unattainable, and theologically preposterous. Perjurers lie because they are liars; fornicators fornicate because they are fornicators; burglars steal because they are thieves. The whole idea that a criminal did not mean to do what he did but is really a good man on the inside is absurd! But this is what the psychologists and the courts are arguing today – an adoption of the hedonistic, philandering philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778).

Love of self and contributing all success to one's perceived power is nothing new. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, had this problem:

> KJVHabakkuk 1:11 Then shall *his* mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, *imputing* this his power unto his god.
>
> NIVHabakkuk 1:11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—guilty people, **whose own strength is their god**.
>
> BereanHabakkuk 1:11 Then they sweep by like the wind and pass through. They are guilty; **their own strength is their god**.
>
> NASBHabakkuk 1:11 Then they will sweep through like the wind and pass on. But they will be held guilty, They **whose strength is their god**.
>
> Barnes: "This his power is his god - God had said to Israel Exodus 6:7, "I will be to thee God." The Chaldaean virtually said, "this my strength is to me my god. This Nebuchadnezzars own words speak Daniel 4:30; "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Isn't this the sin of many monarchs?

While it is possible for a sinner to sin less, it is not anthropologically possible to be sinless. And, because it is not possible to amputate sin from the sinner, it is heresy to think that it is spiritually possible to separate sin from the sinner or for people to hate the sin and love the sinner. Oh, that it was that easy! While the Word can divide soul and spirit, it is not possible for men to separate sin from the sinner. To call for an end of abortion without calling for the death penalty for abortionists is more Rousseauan than Christian. Rousseau would say, "I know the abortionists kill babies, but because they are trying to help women, they must be really good people."

Rousseau taught the world to judge him by his feelings, and not by his actions. Though he consorted with prostitutes, Rousseau felt he was really a good man with noble thoughts, honorable ambitions, and virtuous feelings. The belief that we should *love the sinner and hate the sin* is a product of Rousseauan "touchy-feely" anthropology that spreads the seeds of permissiveness and irresponsibility. That some crimes are hate crimes and others are love crimes; and that some criminals are good criminals and others are bad criminals is psychological non-sense. '*There is none good but God*,' said Jesus. But, there are many evil men who think they are good people (Mark 10:18).

America's youth are trained to be open minded, proud, and to tolerate evil. Moral laxity marks our age. Permissiveness perpetuates immorality. Hate is associated with bigotry and nasty dogmatism. Love of pleasure, love of self, and love of money wins awards. Politicians believe money is the answer to all of man's problems. In fact, in the minds of modern man, the lack of money is the root of all evil. Everything is a commercial issue. To them othing is a human nature problem.

We don't see the sinfulness of sin or the ugliness of ugly. We are deaf to hissing of the snake near the poisonous tree. We are more concerned about the "economy" and "health issues" than we are about evil at work in our own hearts.

To *hate evil* is a positive command. It takes moral energy to hate evil. We are ordered by our Heavenly Father to break from the pack and to stoke the fires of hatred; i.e., to hate evil and evil men manufacturing evil. To shut down the "moonshine" industry, you must arrest the moonshiners. While modern humanists bifurcates man separating actions from feelings, and feelings from criminal acts, the Scripture does not sever the man from his actions. Evil is not out there floating through the air. It is in the human heart. Man is seen a whole unit. Actions are evil because man's heart forges evil.

> *Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

Rousseau taught that man was good and that evil was in the environment. Only a Rousseau could sleep with a whore then try to convince her of the path of virtue. He sent his bastard children off to boarding school, then wrote a book on how to raise children. Thus, severing the man from his actions and declaring the criminal virtuous has been a product of more than a little evil.

**The second command:** "*rejoice in the Lord*."

Gladness is a benefit of the gospel (97:11), but in this verse the LORD commands His own to rejoice (97:12). Because we live in a negative world bombarded with gloomy news stories, it takes positive, moral energy to "*rejoice*" and "*be glad*" Thus, the Lord commands his saints to add fuel to fires

of gladness by an act of the will. A singing saint is a powerful Christian. Maybe, for this reason, Satan tries so hard to keep the Christian defeated and depressed.

In conclusion, the OT gospel is **not** the offer of "fire insurance" against the flames of hell, but the proclamation of the reign of God. The need of the hour is **not** "*feel good about yourself*," but a bold declaration that "*The Lord rules over the affairs of men.*" Things are not out of control. Our God reigns!

Because His kingdom is now, men should repent and bow the knee to his authority. Those who enter His dominions will find "*preservation*" and "*deliverance*." Likewise, those who have accepted the yoke have a duty to hate evil as well as to rejoice in His reign.

Source: Stockton, Old Testament Theology Lecture Notes, unpublished manuscript

# 30. Psalm 99

## The Lord Reigns

**Note**: Psalm 99 is also an OT gospel similar in style to Psalm 97.

It declares "*The Lord reigns*" in verse one.

The first word (*exalt*) in verse five is a Piel imperative. This word means "*to lift up"* and is translated "*I lift up my hand to the Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth*" in Genesis 14:22. The idea is that of allegiance and devotion. Thus, the imperative is a gospel invasion term calling the reader to pledge allegiance to the Lord God . . . by oath; that is, to enter into a covenant with Him.

Like Psalm 97, Psalm 99:5 publishes the Jussive or gospel invitation -- to "*worship*" -- a Hithpael Jussive verb meaning "to cause yourself to bow down" to Him Who is on the throne (v. 5).

How does one get saved in Psalm 99? The answer is to understand "*the Lord reigns*" . . . to bow down and acknowledge His authority . . . to "*lift up your hand*" and to enter into a covenant / oath of allegiance to Him.

# 31. Psalm 103:19

## Total Jurisdiction

**"The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."**

Feel angry every time you read the news?

Do you think the world is out of control? That mankind is on the brink of destruction? That you must do something to stop the madness?

Not according to our text.

This psalm overflows with praise. Consider it a man's sermon to his own soul. "*Bless the Lord, O my Soul*."

Let all my thoughts, emotions, and skill be applied to expressing praises to my Sovereign Lord and Savior. Look intently at his benefits: forgiveness, healing, pardon, holiness, righteousness, and sanctification.

He reigns over the good and bad, life and death, my life and the life of my family, my nation and the nations of the world. Stop pouting. Sing, Soul, Sing.

Having partially celebrated the benefits of being under his authority, he moves to the wonder of His majesty and dominion. God's kingdom is not of this world nor does he appeal to man-made jurisdictions to approve his rule on earth.

The term "*his throne in the heavens*" expresses the eminence, glory, power, stability, and unchangeableness of God's kingdom (Benson). His kingdom rules over all animals, all creatures, all men, and all events. Bless the Lord, O my Soul!

His kingdom is based on His authority. Unlimited by time and space He reigns over all of nature, all men, all the time, in every place.

Angels, hosts, ministers, are exhorted to bless the Lord. The psalmist even prods his own soul to holy action (103:20-22).

> "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits"

All governments, therefore, are ordered "*to kiss the Son*" (Psalm 2); to acknowledge His authority and to surrender to it.

# 32. Psalm 115:3

## Limitless Power

**"Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."**

The secular mind thinks it can do anything it imagines. This belief is reinforced by the grand plan to build the Tower of B Babel and the fictional account of man going to the moon.

The only Person who can do as He pleases is the LORD God (Elohim) / Elah / Dieu / Shen / Allah / Dios / Theos – the one "What" existing in three "Who's."

Unlike idols made of earthen clay that can only be in one place at one time, the LORD (YHWH) is in the heavens as well as on earth.

The dogmatics of the psalmist informs us that Elohim is not limited by time, space, and matter. There is no limit to God's knowledge, presence, or power. He proposes, He disposes; He commands, it happens. Moreover, he has never learned anything. He is the Source of all knowledge worth knowing.

> "He who made all, rules all, and both by a word of power. He disposes all persons and things to his own glory." (Matthew-Henry).

His pleasure controls the destiny of all mankind. What he wills blossoms in the unfolding events of history. Nothing happens without His order and His approval.

His will cannot be frustrated, stonewalled, or defeated. God runs the universe from the rising of the Sun to the dew on the lily! He is an irresistible Force, and when the Force meet an unmovable object, the unmovable object shatters into pieces.

> Christ "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3)!

Just as a dime cannot stop a turbine diesel Pacific Union Coal DTEL running from Chicago to New Orleans, all the nickel and dime schemes of rebels, renegades, and revolutionaries cannot derail the locomotives pulling the boxcars of God's will from eternity through time.

# 33. Psalm 135:6

## Unhindered

**"Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps."**

If we are honest, we get frustrated when the grocery bag breaks or a shoelace comes untied. In fact, ambitious men fight frustration all day long.

Unlike men, the Lord is never frustrated, never disappointed, and never agitated.

If He wills it, He has it.

His power and jurisdiction are universal. Unlike pagan deities which are confined by local customs, the Lord reigns unbounded over the skies, seas, land, and people.

The psalmist announces the supremacy of YHWH above all the gods of the nations. He makes plans, and puts them in motion. A moth can't stop a rolling semi nor can frail creatures among men hinder the purposes of God. There is no prime minister, parliamentarian, major, or judge that can demoralize God's will.

The LORD created and formed those powers of nature which operate in the heavens, the earth, and the waters *nunc pro tunc* -- powers which creatures are so quick to attribute to "Mother Nature" and the ostensible laws of science.

As the universal sovereign, He has a right to claim our praises.

> "God is, and will be always, the same to his church, a gracious, faithful, wonder-working God. And his church is, and will be, the same to him, a thankful, praising people: thus his name endures for ever. He will return in ways of mercy to them, and will delight to do them good" – Matthew Henry.

# 34. Psalm 139

## Sovereignty in Creation and Formation

**"For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether."**

This psalm is the crown jewel in the Divine Library of Theological Hymns because it addresses the attributes of the infinite, personal God Who created us.

It turns the dark, cold winters of life into bright warm summer days, and acts like an ice pack for the bruises we receive on the journey through life.

In this sacred hymn, we learn that the LORD God is not only infinite — omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, but that He is touchingly personal — a God who knows us and guides us —sovereign in His creation and sovereign in the formation of our lives.

**O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known (me).**

There is no "me" after the word "known." It is supplied by the translators because of the context, but the omission is deliberate: God searches and knows "all things."

The word "search" (hachartani) is a Qal perfect, 2nd singular verb indicating completed action. It should be translated, "You have examined me." The word "searched" (examined) originally meant "to dig" (Job 28:3). The visual picture of "dig" informs us that before we searched for God, the All Seeing Eye digs into our inner man to examine our development.

The most fundamental truth of this psalm is not that we are seeking God, but that He seeks us. He knows us physically and spiritually, the seen and the unseen, the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the flowers and the thorns — not to shame us, but to be a Companion and Guide for us. Since He seeks us, shouldn't we seek Him?

The phrase "and known me" is an imperfect, vaw consecutive meaning "you have known." The idea is that God searches us, and he knows all about us. Using the pronoun "me" shows us that the psalmist applied this personally. We should do the same. He knows me!

**2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.**

The psalmist now discusses the particulars of God's knowledge. He knows our movements.

The psalmist wants us to know that God sees the specific actions of every man as if that man were the only living creature on earth. He knows when we sit down and rise up; when we walk and when we stand still; when we work and when we play.

"thought afar off": Does this mean God understands our thoughts because He is in heaven and we are on earth or does this means He knows our thoughts even though we have not yet conceived them? The answer is "Yes." Both are true.

**3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.**

The Hebrew word "compasseth" (zarah) means "to scatter, cast away, or to winnow." Its noun form is "pitchfork."

Zarah is a Piel verb expressing intense action. God goes before us vigorously clearing the path of tripping stones and piercing thorns that might injure us. Everything remaining on this journey is for His glory and our good . . . the discipline of a wise father . . . a lesson for growth and maturity.

**4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.**

The word "altogether" means "perfectly." Before we own a word, our word is known to Him. He knows our thoughts before we think them; our words before we speak them; our knowledge before we learn it. His perception reaches to the spring of our thinking. Before our sentences are fully formed out of the whirlpool of consonants and vowels, God knows them perfectly– the good and the bad, those private and those public. Our thoughts are His thoughts before they become our thoughts. Who can grasp the amazing knowledge of our Creator?

While God knows all our thoughts before we speak them, not all our thoughts are from God; some come from Satan (See Matthew 16:16-17; 16:22-23)

**5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.**

The word "beset" (tsarnani) means "to dig a trench" or "to build a battle ramp." Picture an ancient mote. God builds a battle ramp, a mote, around us to protect us. Our camp is surrounded by the LORD.

The phrase "laid thine hand upon me" could be translated "laid me in your hand." The idea is that God cupped his hand and covered His servant. The perfect implies completed action. God has already placed a wall around us to protect us.

Why should we fear invaders? His grace and power is above us, below us, beside us, behind us, and before us. There is no escape from Him. We cannot turn back. Not only can we not escape Him, our enemies cannot advance toward us without His consent.

**16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members (days) were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.**

In relation to the word "substance" Barnes shares this insight:

> "The single word in the original translated "my substance, yet being unperfect," is גלם gôlem. It occurs only in this place, though the verb - גלם gâlam - is found in 2 Kings 2:8, where it is used in reference to the mantle of Elijah: And Elijah took his mantle, and "wrapped it together," etc. That is, he rolled it up, or he folded it. The noun, then, means that which "is" rolled or wrapped together; that which is folded up, and hence, is applicable to anything folded up or undeveloped; and would thus most aptly denote the embryo, or the foetus, where all the members of the body are as yet folded up, or undeveloped; that is, before they have assumed their distinct form and proportions. This is undoubtedly the idea here. Before the embryo had any such form that its future size, shape, or proportions could be marked by the eye of man, it was clearly and distinctly known by God."

But, it is more than "known." God shaped (folded) our being, our bodies, and our organs.

The word "members" (yamim) is the word "days" in Hebrew inferring that the days in our lives are numbered by Him and not due to circumstances or personal choices.

In relation to this text Ellicott has this to say:

> "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."
>
> "The days which are all reckoned, and not one of them is wanting."
>
> "All the ancient versions make that which is written in God's book either the days of life, or men born in the course of these days, each coming into being according to the Divine will."

Benson adds the following insight:

> "Thy eternal wisdom formed the plan, and according to that, thy almighty power raised the structure. The allusion to the needlework seems to be still carried on."
>
> The Declaration got it right. "We are endowed by Creator with certain unalienable rights . . ." Know it! Claim it. Exercise it. Good men do not let government define their rights or demand the obtain a license to exercise them. They are unalienable and no legislation by CONgress can alienate your rights by the passage of some prejudical statute.

God is sovereign and the reader could do no better that consider His sovereignty in their personal circumstances as he contemplates the rest of this psalm.

# 35. Proverbs 16:1

## Questions and Answers?

**"The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord."**

Who can fully understand "free will" and the intersection of God's sovereignty upon decision making? What a paradox!

That our thoughts are always our own is a huge fallacy (Matthew 16:23); that we are responsible to manage our thoughts is sensible.

Evil thoughts remind us of our accountability to Him, while good thoughts cause us to rejoice in Him. Some thoughts are put in our minds by Satan (Matthew 16). We are, after all, in a spiritual battle for the mind. As soon as we wake up and turn on the radio, social engineers spin the news to program us into their image.

We are not sufficient in ourselves to plan our own life; our sufficiency is of God. We can plan, but plans will crumble unless God blesses those hopes.

Let us thank God for the good in our hearts, and depend on Him for the grace to be better, think better, and decide better. His commands not only demand we forsake disobedient thoughts, but provoke us to depend upon Him for the grace and willingness to think well.

We do not deny that life involves choices, but good men consider His movements in the victories and defeats of life.

Success does not merely depend on our choices but upon the blessings of Almighty God. We are **not** the master of our fate **nor** the captain of our ship! Under His hand, we rise and fall. Both our supplies and our sparsities are from Him.

Life is not a do-list. Options demand decision. But, the righteous consult Him and lean upon His guidance, His provisions, His wisdom, and His power.

> *"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* ***For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that****" – James 4:13-15.*

# 36. Proverbs 16:4

## On Stage for His Glory

**"The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."**

Everything God makes has a purpose.

Like God, man does things for himself. But, unlike man, God's pleasures are not drenched with selfish intentions.

That God's sovereignty extends over human suffering, and that He creates the wicked for the day of evil can be difficult to process.

It is much easier to believe God is the source of all good . . . and that Satan is the cause of all pain. But, it's not that simple. Ask Job.

The "*wicked*" include men of power: judges, attorneys, bureaucrats, legislators, police, generals, and other government officials.

"*created for the day of evil*" does not necessarily refer to the demise of the wicked, but to the fact that even the wicked are subservient to His will; that they will serve His purpose for good or evil.

The LORD has made the wicked to showcase His sapphire justice in the day of judgment; that is, their mind-boggling dissolution and staggering downfall demonstrate the righteousness of His fire and thundering judgments. The apostle put it this way: "*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God*" (Romans 11:22).

Every dynamic story has a flat antagonist opposed to good will and a protagonist of noble character that seeks justice and liberty for all. In the exodus story Pharaoh appears on the stage of history as the stubborn rebel insistent on tightening the shackles of every Hebrew slave in Egypt, but the LORD appears as Israel's Champion ordering the tyrant, "*Let my people go*!"

God even hardened the heart of Pharaoh to increase his resistance to the authority of the LORD in order to showcase the power of His salvation and the muscle of His mighty judgment (Exodus 9:16):

> *"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."*

On this battlefield circumstances got worse before they got better:

> *"The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand*

*shall destroy them." (Exodus 15:9).*

But, on the "*day of evil*" this God of War littered Egypt with corpses (Exodus 12:30). And, this same Champion delivered His people from bondage by the blood of the Passover lamb and by power crossing the Red Sea) (Exodus 6:6; 15:3-6).

That He is supreme even in man's suffering ought to give us pause. He made us for his pleasure; i.e. you and I are made for him.

> *"You have made us for yourself [O Lord], and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."- St. Augustine.*

Most men learn more in their pain than they do in their pleasure; more in their adversity than in their prosperity. The Superintendent of man's pain is also the Savior who causes good to come out of evil; triumph out of tragedy; wisdom out of foolishness; and gold out of the fire.

# 37. Proverbs 16:9

## His Blessings

**"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."**

Why some men rise so high and others sink so low is one of life's great mysteries.

Good men are not always wealthy, and credit card companies know that poor people are not necessarily evil.

The man referred to here is not the wicked, but the good man with a golden heart to please God and do what is right.

The junkyard devices of the wicked are an abomination to Him. He has no interest in prospering rebels except to heighten the intensity of their judgment.

The righteous man can plan to succeed in an enterprise, but only God can add his blessing to the man's work. The industrious man can develop a plan, but God determines the outcome.

The Lord calls a man to be faithful, not to manipulate the results. Pray, plan, and pull the plow, but trust God for the harvest.

The Lord directs the successes and failures of a man's life. Sometimes it is better to fail, than to succeed. Men often learn more from their losses than their gains.

Beware of the fallacy of praising God for the sweets and cursing the Devil for the bitters. Even the ground is cursed "*for thy sake*." Let us give Him glory during all seasons of life: the ups and downs, the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly.

# 38. Proverbs 16:33

## Sovereignty and Chance

**"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."**

Be honest! Who hasn't prayed, "Lord help me!" before buying a lottery ticket or placing a bet?

We all believe God controls chance, we just can't figure out how to make permanent friends with "Lady Luck."

The practice of casting lots is mentioned seventy times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In spite of the many references about casting lots, we know almost nothing about the process. It could be a reference to picking straws or sticks or choose staffs or even a game of rolling the dice. The modern equivalent would be a "flip of the coin" at a football game.

The sailors on Jonah's ship cast lots to determine which crew member was the object of God's wrath upon their craft (Jonah 1:7) . The soldiers cast lots to see who would take Jesus garments (Matthew 27:5). The eleven apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas (Acts 1:26).

The point of this proverb is that in games of chance, the sovereign Lord controls the outcome.

The New Testament does not encourage us to employ games of chance in determining His will for our lives. We have the complete Word of God which is sufficient to equip us unto every good work. But, if things do come down to the flip of the coin like determining how to break a tie a mayor's race, accept the outcome as from the Lord.

# 39. Proverbs 21:1

## Water in His Hands

**"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."**

While kids love to play in the water kicking and splashing, scientist struggle to understand the unique properties of its solvency and cohesiveness.

Is anything on earth easier to maneuver than maleable water?

"*Like rivers of water*" is in the emphatic position in Hebrew stressing the simplicity of turning the heart of the king to do the bidding of Almighty God -- for good or evil.

Many in the media treat political leaders as mini-gods with all kinds of divine powers. But, this text paints a different picture. All of the king's motives, thoughts, intentions, plans, schemes, deceptions, wishes, demands, lusts, cravings for good or bad are compared to a river of wants directed by the hands of the LORD; i.e. His hands acts like river banks guiding the flow of water – controlling the ambition of presidents, congressmen, and the mega-rich.

Kings are **not** gods. They are **not** omnipotent. They face limitations and resistance, and they are often the most angry, frustrated people on earth. They put their pants on one leg at a time. As a hand moves a glove, God manages rulers.

> *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).*

**The Pharaoh of the Exodus** thought he was in charge, but God hardened his heart in order to showcase His power and authority over all Egypt (Exodus 7:13; 9:16). Ten times Pharaoh said, "No!", then the LORD broke the back of Egypt. Shattered, Pharaoh said, "Yes! Israel can go."

God hardened his heart, but Pharaoh consented to that thickening; that is, it is was his preferred posture as a man of power.

> [Note: God does not harden the hearts of the willing . . . of the innocent . . . of the seeking . . . of His own struggling children. Perish the thought! "*A bruised reed He will not break*."]

**King Ahab** did everything in a king's power to protect himself from the death sentence God pronounced upon him. But, the Lord used a lying spirit to entice Ahab into battle against the Syrians. Even though he took off his royal apparel ,

put on a cuirass, and disguised himself as an ordinary soldie, he met his appointment with death by a random arrow that lodged between the seam in his cuirass piercing his rib cage (1 Kings 22:22, 34).

Resin, King of Syria:

> *"and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: 'The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.' But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him (Ephraim), and stirs up his enemies . . . So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day" (Isaiah 9:9-12, 14).*

King of Babylon:

> *" behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants (Judah), and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation" (Jeremiah 25:9).*

**Pharaoh Hophra** (Jeremiah 44:30 Ezekiel 39:6fff): Great kings think they are in control of their destiny. Herodotus says of King Pharaoh Hophra (589-570 BC) (Jeremiah 44:30 ), that he was so lifted up with pride, and so secure of his happy state, that he said there was no God who could deprive him of his kingdom. But the LORD compared him to a crocodile with fishhooks in its jaws and compared his generals and princes to fish swimming alongside a crocodile drawn out of the safety of the Nile to the killing fields of Cyrene (N. Africa) where they were fatally defeated by Amasis who then ruled Egypt from 570-526 BC. . [Note, the word *pharaoh* means *"crocodile"* in Arabic].

**Governor Pilate** expressed His humanistic perspective when he told Jesus, "Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?"

Christ corrected Pilate's shriveled view of Providence saying,

> *"You could have no power (authority) at all over me, except it were given you from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee has the greater sin." ( John 19:10)*

Our Lord challenged the Roman Governor by informing him that this matter was out of his hands; that he did not have the power or principle to resist the mob as he thought he had.

**America**: Yes, God guides the complexities in the nation's capital. Congress, the president, and the judiciary are merely water in the hand of Almighty God.

*"How the mighty have fallen! . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him . . . How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? " (2 Samuel 1:19b; Psalm 2:12; Hebrews 2:3).*

# 40. Ecclesiastes 7:14

## Prosperity and Adversity

**"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him."**

The context of this Scripture is the command, "*Consider the work of God*" in the previous verse.

Man has an insatiable interest in forecasting the future. Cultists invest much of their mental energy attempting to divine the future with one eye on the stars and the other on a newspaper. God alone knows and directs tomorrow. He even sustains the Zodiac . . . but, He is **not** a fortune teller.

"*Consider*" is a command. Humanity tends to think good things come from God, and bad things come from Satan; that the Lord is the source of good luck, and that the Devil is the source of bad luck. Such a view is way too simple.

**This text sets the record straight**: God controls today and tomorrow. He is the Cause of prosperity and adversity. Because both are from Him, both require a godly response. Both require acknowledgment of His Providence and obedience to His law-order.

> "**that man should find nothing after him**" **or better:** " *after it*;" that is, after his present condition, whether it be prosperous or afflictive -- that no man might be able to foresee his future or what fate shall come after his present condition -- that he might live in a constant dependence upon the Lord, and not despair in trouble, nor be secure or presumptuous in prosperity (Benson).

# 41. Ecclesiastes 9:1-3

**For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them 2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.**

**9:6 Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.**

We live in an Arminian society where humanists teach that success is a result of choices; that man's fate is the result of his selections. But, the Word of God declares another perspective.

K & D on "*declare*" (*buwar*) suggest the term means to explore; "*the result of my exploring is this . . .* "

Those addressed are the "the righteous, and the wise," but what is true of the righteous is also true of the wicked. Both are in God's hand.

The works of man and his destiny "*Are in the hand of God*;" i.e. they are subject to His power, and governed by His providence, as this phrase is used in Proverbs 21:1 John 3:35; compared with Matthew 28:18.

"*love*" and "*hate*" appear to be tokens of God's favor and displeasure.

If so, verse one seems to be saying that no man, rich or poor, eastern or western, can tell whether God loves him or hates him based on his circumstances; also, no man knows whether he will be loved or hated; or whether he will be given to love or hate. In other words, a man's destiny is not in his own hands. A man's constellation is "*in the hand of God*."

Moreover, we are not good at discerning who God loves or who He hates. Chastisement looks like punishment. But, in reality it is evidence of love (Hebrews 12).

> "As far as the sons of men are left to themselves, their hearts are full of evil; and prosperity in sin, causes them even to set God at defiance by daring wickedness. Though, on this side of death, the righteous and the wicked may often seem to fare alike, on the other

side there will be a vast difference between them." – Matthew Henry.

"*All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked*" – Rich or poor, man or woman, white or black, righteous or unrighteous, advantage and adversity happen to all men. Life and death, happiness and misery, come to everyone.

> "not only *are* men's works (*in the hand of God*) . . . even their **inward passions** or affections, which seem to be most in their own power, are as much in God's disposal as their **outward** actions. Then follows the last clause in the same order in which the words lie in the Hebrew text: no man knoweth **all, or any thing**, which is before him . . . . all men, and all their affections, and actions, and the events of them, are perfectly **known** to God, and **disposed** by him, **men know nothing** . . . " – Jamieson-Fausset-Brown. (emphasis mine).

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown offer this application:

> "It is best therefore for a man to enjoy the gifts of God with cheerfulness, Ecclesiastes 9:7-9; to be diligent in his calling, Ecclesiastes 9:10, and leave the issue to God, Ecclesiastes 9:11,12. The praise of wisdom, Ecclesiastes 9:13-18."

**Note on Ecclesiastes 9:3**

**9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.**

Solomon makes on observation about men: "There heart is full of evil and madness is in the heart."

"*heart*" is a reference to the inner man, motives, ambitions and desires.

"*full of evil*" – the word "*evil*" is *ra* -- a theological term on the sinfulness of man. Man is not born good nor is he inclined to do good.

"*and madness*" (*holelah* in Hebrew and *periphereia* in the LXX) – "*madness*" in Ecclesiastes is associated with "folly" and "evil" ( 1:17, 2:12, 9:3, and 10:13).

The Greek word for "*madness*" (perphereia) refers to the arc of a circle. Hence "*going around in a circle*." We consider a man going around in a circles as crazy. When someone identifies a lunatic they will point to the head and move their finger around in small circles to let others know the individual is not right in the head.

The root word of *lunacy* is *lunar* – a reference to the circle of the moon.

This madness is describe in the New Testament as "*the works of the flesh . . . which are these*" --

> *"Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like . . . (Galatians 5:19-21).*

Sin, transgression, and iniquity reveal the lunacy within man.

It is lunacy "doing the same thing over and over and over while expecting different results."

It is lunacy to believe that man is born good. The most optimistic people in the world should be in an insane asylum.

> Michel de Montaigne: "Man is certainly crazy. He could not make a mite, and he makes gods by the dozen."
>
> Samuel Beckett: "We are all born crazy. Some of us remain that way."
>
> Benson: "also the heart of the sons of men" makes this fact a reason for "madly" persisting in "evil while they live, and after that," &c., sin is "madness."

Thus, while God knows all and directs all things "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them" (9:1).

*"After that they go to the dead"* after all their mad and wicked pranks in the whole course of their life, they die in the same manner as the best men do (Matthew Poole).

The remedy for all this craziness is to look at the Serpent on the cross (John 3:14).

# 42. Isaiah 40:12

**Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?**

This imagery of the Lord holding the oceans in the palm of His hand not only shows us that His sovereignty controls the oceans, it reveals how tiny the oceans are and how strong, powerful, knowledgeable, and enormous He is.

Scientist estimate there 332,519,000 cubic miles of water on the planet, and His Word informs the sovereign God holds them in the palm of His hand; that the nations are like dust on a merchant's scale. He not only holds the waters in his hand, but all the dust, mountains, and hills in a balance.

"measured" implies precise exact knowledge – to the ounce of waters in the sea, precise exact knowledge of the grains of the sand on the seashore.

"waters" – expresses his control of the most malleable substance on earth – solid, steam, ice. Who among us can control a cup of water in the hallow of our hand? No one! But, the Lord can! Not only a cup, but all the seas, lakes, icepacks, and streams on the earth.

The purpose of this revelation is not to frustrate us, but for the comfort of Christian-men. Politics is a lot like water —difficult to control.

Consider this: the One who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand controls the madness of politicians. He manages the crash, boom, and bang of governmental policy making. Even the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord and He turns it, like water, whithersoever He will (Proverbs 21:1).

"Comfort, comfort my people" (Isaiah 41:1)

Why do we worry about cracks, creaks, and crumbles of polarized political parties? He controls and exposes the foolishness of these power hungry, death loving maniacs. Nations rise and fall by His command.

Let us not doubt His sovereignty! Rather, let us take comfort in knowing that the One who holds unstable water in His hand, controls the evil thoughts of kings; that He restrains their madness. History is not going around in circles. Rather, it is moving toward the kingdom of God on earth.

Let the light of His sovereignty shine through the cloud of politics to warm your heart.

# 43. Isaiah 40:14-15

**"With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust."**

Isaiah sheds light on the solitariness and omniscience of God by asking a question: *Who has added to His knowledge?* The answer is "No One!" Because God is the Source of knowledge, He has never learned anything from man. He accepts no advice from the sages of this world because He is the "wonderful," infinite, incomprehensible Counselor" with galaxies of wisdom (Isaiah 9:6).

Surprisingly, however, He has the ability to forget — to forget our sins because of our Lord's work on the cross (Hebrews 10:17).

Before us is a lesson on perspective. Two times the prophet uses the interjection "Behold" (hegeh) used in an imperative sense.

"drops" and "dust" and "islands" are symbols of tiny, insignificant things.

To the consumer of news, international politics is a giant meteorite threatening the earth – a tangled knot that can't be unraveled – a monolithic rock individuals can't move. But, to the Lord the nations are like a drop in the bucket . . . as dust on the scales . . . tiny grains of sand that can be blown around by the breath of the Almighty. The nations are like ashes which the wind drives away; like grains of sand on a seashore so easily moved and sifted by the waves of providence.

Know that it takes 3 million drops of water to fill a 3 gallon bucket, and it takes $1.85 \times 10^{32}$ specks of dust to fill a water glass; and, the trillions of tons of dirt on Crete are like a speck of dust to the Lord – 100 micrometers (10,000 microns). The smallest thing a human eye can see is the width of a hair. The largest rock in the world known to man is the Uluru Rock in Australia. It is approximately 5.8 miles in circumference but to the Lord is less than grain of sand on the seashore.

A bookshelf of knowledge from a triple Ph.D. adds nothing to the wisdom of God. One cell in the mind of God, if He has cells, contains more knowledge than all the words in all the books in all the libraries of the world.

This being so, why does finite man question the works of the infinite Creator? Attempting to understand him is like trying to hold the night sky in the palm of your hands; like trying to catch yesterday with a butterfly net; like a whisper hoping to crack a mountain.

Amazingly, however, the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent God permits tiny, proud man to resist him in his own paltry way. The horse may buck but, He holds the reigns.

> Isaiah 65:2-3 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, after their own thoughts; A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;
>
> Our Lord is like a king with a crown full of stars. Why underestimate His power to control the toothpicks of international politics? To the Lord, a defiant ruler is like a blade of grass trying to uproot a boulder; a shadow trying to hide the Sun; a caterpillar defying an elephant.

# 44. Isaiah 40:23-24

## The Non-Factors

**. . . who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.**

Government is something run by the worst of people, and most of us would love to give them a slap in the face for their idiocy. But, we can't.

These rulers fascinate us as well as frustrate us.

However, there is a God in heaven that has the power to dispense justice to these "mighty" potentates. He limits the destructive acts of these potentates.

The "*who*" refers to the LORD God Who created the heavens and earth *ex nihilo* (Isaiah 40:22; Genenesis 1:1-2). The populace marvel at their standing and power. But He regards rulers (politicians and bureaucrats) as less than **nothing** -- zero, zilch, nada!

"*nothing*" (ayin) is a particle adverb – a form of negation: that is, big powerful men are didly to Him. "*ayin*" is translated "barren" in Genesis 11:30.

"*vanity*" (tohu) means "formlessness," "confusion," and "emptiness." He makes them as "*emptiness*" (*tohu = void* in Genesis 1:2); that is, they are nonessential, expendable little creatures in the accomplishment of His will upon the earth. What diet water is to a fat lady, politicians are to the Lord!

We think too much of public officers and credit them with too much power. Who remembers the names of the rulers of Italy, Germany, Norway, Austria, or Bolivia in the 1950s? Who remembers the Speaker of the House or the Senate Majority leader in 1890? Unless you have a triple Ph.D. in history, you don't remember the names of any of these miscreants. Likewise, Isaiah reminds us that God humbles the proud and "*brings princes to nothing*."

**Isaiah 40:24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.**

The Hebrew conjunction "*yea*" (*aph*) is mentioned three times as triple assurance to the ruin of tyrants. Yes, they shall fail; yes, they shall flounder; yes, they shall fall.

The terms "*not take root*," "*wither*," and "*stubble*" present the same dreary destiny. Empires are born and buried. Kings live and die. Presidents are on

center stage for a breath and then expire. Where are the great Pharaohs, the mighty emperors, and powerful Caesars today?

We are not seeing the birth of civilizations, but their extinction. The great monarchs spread their leaves like a mighty oak over a region of the earth and are then mowed down like grass.

**"***they shall wither***" --** Consider Attila the Hun and his sudden death (heart attack?) which **led to the collapse of the Hun Empire** (453 A.D.). According to Jordanes, Attila married a new wife, a young woman named Ildico, and celebrated with great feasting. In the morning, the guards broke into his room and found him dead in his bed with his bride weeping over him.

Three of his sons fought among themselves, and the army broke up into pieces depleting the strength of the army – "Yea . . . their stock shall not take root in the earth."

# 45. Isaiah 45:6-7

## Light and Darkness

**"That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."**

The context of this Scripture is God announcing the rise of the Persian Messiah – Cyrus the Great.

The "they" refers to Israel, God's ancient people.

The secular mind thinks there are many forces influencing politics; that there are white hats and black hats producing polar results in the realm of politics; that men are in a battle between good and evil. But, there is only One Power that matters.

Because Israel lived in a pluralistic society, they had difficulty holding on to the absolute truth that there is only one, absolute God that is the Source of all blessings and panaceas -- that their God was, is, and shall be the one and only God who created the heavens and the earth, light and darkness, good and evil (calamity).

It wasn't until after the exile (586-536 BC) that Jews seized monotheism with an iron grasp. After the exile the Jews, the most polytheistic people, became the most monotheistic nation on earth. After their chastisement they vigorously held to the belief that there is only one, true, absolute God; that YHWH was this God. Refusing to yield to the pluralism of the goy, many gave their lives for what they believed during the Maccabean Period.

Likewise, members of the New Israel of God cling tenaciously to the fact there is only one God even though they refer to Him as the Holy Trinity — one Being existing in three persons.

Again, the solitariness of God comes into focus: "*In the Beginning God . . . .*"

> *"Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one." – 1 Corinthians 8:4*
>
> *"That they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth." – Psalm 83:18*

**"Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4).**

The Hebrew word for "*one*" is *echad*. The Latin word for "*one*" is "*solus*" which means *alone* or *only*. Christians, because of revelation understand this Elohim is not lonely; that there is one, solitary God existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; not three gods, but one God; one what in three whos.

The Greek word for "*one*" is *monos.* The English word "*monk*" comes from the Greek word "*monos*."

**Q: Who is this one God?** The rabbis reverently refer to His name as "*Ha Shem*" or "the Name."

Ha Shem, "the Name" (YHWH) means, "I am that I am." An articulate black preacher might shout Ha Shem means, "I am what I am; I am what I was; I am what I will be: I was, I is, and I shall be what you need me to be in your difficult circumstances."

*Ha Shem* refers to God's covenant name YHWH which is called the tetragrammaton (the four letters).

**YHWH** is a present active verb meaning "*the Existent One*" or "*He is*" in contrast to those gods that do not exist.

In this context evil is opposed to peace and prosperity; that is, God is **not** claiming to be the source of "sin," but He does claim to be the Source of adversity, difficulty, and calamity. Sin has its source in man, and calamity has its source in the Lord.

> "Church father Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 AD) rendered it this way: *' . . . the word of Isaiah, I, the Lord, make peace, and create evil; meaning by that, I maintain peace, and permit war.'*" (J. H. MacMahon (translator) "On Psalm LXXVII" in The Refutation of All Heresies by Hippolytus, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1868, p429).

To amplify the solitariness of God, the LORD claims to be the Source of light and darkness, even *good* and evil (calamity). But, this claim raises a theological anomaly.

**Q**: If God admits to creating evil, is He not to blame for all the evil in the world?

A: God forbid!

The question is sufficiently answered if we interpret this phrase as an idiom implying that **evil or calamity** exists by the permissive will of God; that **the term** "*evil*" **addresses misfortune and not SIN**; that evil is not a sovereign person or force nor is evil supreme; that the LORD is sovereign creating light and darkness, good and evil —ordaining the pleasures of life as well as permitting hardships during the course of life.

*Evil as a principle of sin* is **not** in the atmosphere, **nor** does it blow through the air like wind. It is in men. But *evil as unwelcome adversity, difficulty, and misfortune* is from God. Selah.

This text does **not** support an Eastern dualism between good and evil (sin); nor a dualism between two forces, but attributes light and darkness to one God. Troubles are not the result of two colliding celestial powers, but the will of Elohim, Elah, or YHWH.

Some think evil things come from Satan and good things come from God; that war is of the Devil and peace from God; that if one stands for peace, he is on God's side. This is convenient but not accurate because historical events involve discernment. See Job one where Satan created evil events but only after he obtained permission from Heaven's throne. See Christ's statement, "Think not that I came to bring peace . . . "(Matthew 10:34-36).

Peace is not always the will of God for man nor is perpetual war the will of God for the nations. Life demands discernment. He uses conflict to perfect his own as well as to afflict the ungodly.

> Isaiah 45:9 "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker" by seeking peace when His Lord makes war, and seeking war when His Maker ordains peace.

Likewise, God permits war, but winners of war are not always the good guys. Sometimes, the losers of war are the "good guys" being chastised by the Lord, and the winners of war are the bad guys destined for destruction or severe pruning. Take a look at the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks under Alexander.

Study the Civil War and we learn that God used the North to purify the South (Bible belt); that the South did not lose the Civil War; that the North was deeply divided; that Lincoln was a tyrant that suspended the writ of habeas corpus, jailed thousands of people who disagreed with his policies, and eventually enslaved the north subjugating them to federal tyranny . . . and income tax; that God was judging the nation; not just the South. To believe the North were the good guys and the South were the bad guys is a twisted perspective perpetrated by pagans with a federal, centralized agenda.

1. Literate Christians promote the truth that **not only** does God permit evil (calamity) to exist; He restrains it by the same will (Psalm 46:9). The LORD God is supreme. His omnipotence and wisdom reign over the comforts men enjoy as well as troubles men seek to avoid. He is the Source of good; and the One ordaining and restraining evil.

Do you want the will of God in your life? What if His will is for you to be poor and not rich, common and not great, weak and not strong?

*"What is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination to God" (Luke 16:15).*

If you are strong, thank him for His grace to you; if you are weak, remember *His strength is made perfect in weakness*. Therefore, give thanks for His grace to you (2 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Note: See the Story of the Titanic where the keys to storage cabinet for binoculars were lost preventing watchmen from spotting the iceberg. Frederick Fleet was the name of the lookout that stated in the enquiry of the sinking of the Titanic "that if they had had binoculars, they could have avoided the collision. David Blair was the second officer that accidentally took the keys with him when he was hastily ordered to leave the ship – an act of Providence no one can explain.

Benson: "All men's comforts and calamities come from my hand."

" . . . there is no power, either of light or darkness, of good or evil, of happiness or misery, independent of the one supreme God, infinite in power and in goodness" (Quoted by Benson).

Matthew Henry: "He is the Author of all that is true, holy, good, or happy; and evil, error, and misery, came into the world by his permission, through the willful apostasy of his creatures, but are restrained and overruled to his righteous purpose."

Let us turn these bold statements into prayers beseeching Him to do what is right and for the grace to endure troubles that arise from His providence. Let us be like the psalmist who said, "I will bless the Lord at all times."

# 46. Isaiah 46:9-10

## Solitariness, Omniscience, and Omnipotence

**"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"**

Did you hear about the man who said girls treat him like God: "They mostly forget I exist until they need my help?"

The one and only command in this text is to "*Remember the former things*." Why is it such a temptation to forget God? How can men find Him in "*the land of forgetfulness*?" (Psalm 88:12).

> "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there" – L.P. Hartley.

Remembering is a duty of man – "*Remember . . . for I am God*." If we fail to remember "the former things," we are doomed to repeat the sins of history.

Thus, **the first step** toward backsliding begins with forgetfulness.

The command, "***Remember*** *the former things*" includes remembering God's goodness to the nation . . . His law . . . His promises and their fulfillment . . . His counsel and explicit will . . . His Son.

Twice the voice from Heaven says, "*I am God*." In mentioning Him the first Hebrew predicate is "El," the mighty and strong one.

The second mention of "*God*" is the Hebrew word "Elohim" – the plural form of "El," the true object of worship (Ellicott). During the Persian Period (Ezra 5), the Jews called Elohim by His Arabic name, "Elah" — a cognate of Allah ("The God").

Isaiah wants men to remember the nature of God: the solitariness of God; the omniscience of God; and, the omnipotence of God.

Opposing idolatry and the belief that government is god, the Spirit calls upon his people to remember their history (the miracles and their passage out of Egypt) and the uniqueness of their God -- a remedy for the "double minded" man who thinks we live in a multi-universe with multiple gods and multiple law-orders. ***Nothing*** *is more apostate than the notion that men are at liberty to choose their own god, their own religion, and their own law-order.*

The triune God declares His solitary existence. "*Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one*" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

*He is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). He does not change, evolve, or degenerate. He is above all, below none, and available to everyone. We need everything, but He needs nothing. We are constantly learning, but He has never learned anything because He is the Source of all knowledge. We need to obey him, but our obedience adds naught to him. Our plans stumble, his counsel stands. We change, but He is immutable (Malachi 3:8). His purpose is the unmovable object that cannot be jarred by the force and fury of men.

We are always learning, but He has never learned anything: "*Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear*" (Is. 65:24).

He declares the end from the beginning and things present from ages past. Out of the former He declared the future. No doubt the text is referring to Cyrus, the Persian Messiah, whom God called by name before he arrived in history to free his people from the jaws of Babylon (Isaiah 41:2). He names the Persian Prince before he was born. Who can fathom such knowledge?

Let us remember Him who declares the end from the beginning lest we become arrogant in the land of forgetfulness.

# 47. Isaiah 52:1-7

## "Thy God reigneth"

**"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7).**

By "Zion," "Jerusalem," and "the holy city" the seer is not addressing modern fake Israel (1948) and the gods of Zionism, but ancient Jerusalem, the beachhead of His work.

How do you rejuvenate an exhausted, defeated people? Isaiah did it by reminding them of the sovereignty of the Lord God: "*Thy God reigneth!*"

The call to "*awake*" is a double imperative to Zion who is portrayed as a castaway in rags and ruin. Isaiah calls the remnant in Babylon to shed their prisoner's tattered clothing . . . to come out of the chains of slavery bolted on them by Egypt, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans . . . and, to clothe themselves with "beautiful garments;" i.e. to shake off their stupor, to hold their heads up with dignity and honor, and to stop acting like they are dust stirred by a chariot wheel.

The speaker is the *LORD* whose name is mentioned nine times in this chapter. **No** man on earth today has permission to preface a statement with "*Thus saith the LORD*." The expression "*Thus saith the LORD*" is the enacting clause of the LORD God. It notifies men of the Source of authority – an expression that isolates, validates, and verifies the authority of the revelation; and expression that forms the foundation of Holy Writ.

Notice word duplications in Isaiah 52. When God wants to verify or emphasize something he repeats the locution:

- Awake, awake; Put on, put on (52:1)
- Jerusalem, holy city (52:1)
- Shake, arise, sit, loose thyself (52:2)
- Sold, redeemed (52:3)
- Egypt, Assyrian; went down, sojourn (52:4)
- LORD, LORD (52:5)
- Know, know (52:6)
- Publish peace, publish salvation (52:7
- Voice, voice; together and eye to eye (52:8)

- Joy and sing; comforted and redeemed; Jerusalem, Jerusalem (52:9).
- Eyes of the nations, the earth shall see (52:10)
- Depart, depart; go ye, go ye (52:11)
- Not go, nor go (52;12

The Lord doesn't want any of his people dressed in rags and chained to some government. Babylon is no place for true Israelites. Be free. Throw off casual. Dress like a prince. Serve the King in the beauty of holiness.

Isaiah has a message for his discouraged nation, "***Thy God reigneth***!" The message was **not** intended for Babylon, but for Israel . . . for the remnant . . . for the true Israel of God. *Thy God reigns* is the gospel of the Old Testament!

The word "*reigns*" (מָלַךְ = *malak*) means "to rule." As a noun the term means "king;" and, as a verb it means *to reign as a king*.

The possessive adjective "**your**" must have instilled hope in the remnant. The one, absolute, true God is portrayed as the Existent One in contrast to all the false gods that don't exist. "*Your God*" or "*Israel's God*" is the one and only true God of the Universe. Even though severely disciplined, He was the God of the remnant. What assurance: Our God reigns, hallelujah!

Those that grasp the sovereignty of God and circulate among the people to proclaim the reign of the LORD God are compared to the movements of the beautiful feet of a graceful antelope.

That God reigns is the major message of Isaiah . . . of the Bible . . . and, it ought to be the gospel of every Christian preacher. During periods of languor, the church needs the same message, "**Your God reigns**."

He reigns now . . . in America . . . England . . . South America . . . Africa . . . Australia . . . Europe . . . Russia . . . and the far east. Know it. Believe it. Rest in it. Study it. Preach it.

Tired? Put on the warm cloak of truth. Remember the main lesson of this passage: "*Thy God reigneth*!"

# 48. Isaiah 54:16-17

## The Destroyer

**"Behold, I have created the smith (blacksmith) that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument (weapons) for his work; and I have created the waster (destroyer) to destroy." – Isaiah 54:16**

We live in a world where government wants to take away guns to stop the shooting, but at the same time arm doctors with needles to shoot people with deadly vaxxines. Something is terribly wrong. There is "madness" in the heart of men (Ecclesiastes 9:3); a love of death among rulers (Proverbs 8:36).

We ask, "Where is God in this cyclone of disorder?"

As the death-cult progresses and we experience the terrors of those who want to cut the world's population in half, it is important to remember the following Scripture:

**First, God creates destroyers.**

The *smith* is the blacksmith or craftsman with skills to create weapons of war: swords, battle axes, hammers, missiles, and needles.

The "*waster*" or "*destroyer*" refers to ancient kings like Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus who used their armies to conquer and control the nations.

In modern times the destroyers may be the federal government: the IRS, the CIA, the FBI, the CDC, the AMA, the NSA, the DOD, the DEA, and other three letter agencies. Looking through the rear view mirror "**destroyers**" could imply natural disasters: tornados, floods, drought, and train wrecks. Nothing happens without His permission.

The "*I*" in this passage refers to the LORD God who creates the craftsman who fashions weapons and the destroyer who uses them -- armies of soldiers who wield the sword to kill and maim . . . doctors eager to kill with syringes in hand.

As we face nations governed by psychopaths hell bent on injecting every man woman and child with the Covid blood-clot jab, let us remember "None can do a hurt that God does not allow" (Pulpit Commentary) — a test of man's resolve to discern evil and resist it with the power of God.

Let us recast this verse in light of the Covid- vax plandemic perspective:

*Isaiah 54:16 "Behold, I have created the medical engineer that*

*manufactures serums, syringes, and needles; and I have created medical practitioners to injure and kill many."*

**Second, God protects the righteous.**

**"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." – Isaiah 54:17**

The "*thee*" or "*you*" in this passage refers to the remnant of Israel, the surviving exiles, or the restored Israel re-fashioned by the severity of the Babylonian deportation.

The term "*weapon*" refers to instruments of war . . . of death.

The word "*tongue*" is a metaphor for legal-accusers with criminal accusations against God's people.

This is a promise of protection for the exiles; i.e., the Lord did not appoint a destroyer to decimate them nor did he subject the remnant to accusation and courtroom prosecutions in a foreign land.

The security of the restored Israel did not rest in the wisdom or prowess of the remnant, but in His righteousness. Because the remnant was right with God, He protected them from the destroyers and military killers. This righteousness is none other than the righteousness of Christ obtained by faith (Romans 3:21-22).

**The lesson for us is clear**: All kinds of destroyers are created by God, but God will protect the righteous from the wasters, destroyers, jabbers, killers, Dr. Hyde doctors, mass murderers, and federal prosecutors.

Stand strong in the Lord, and say "*No*!" to the destroyers.

*"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not!" (Proverbs 1:10)*

# 49. Jermiah 1:4-5

**Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.**

"ordained" is a powerful word. Through revelation, Jeremiah learned that God's sovereignty is not just over the nations, His sovereignty extends to individuals . . . to him and his calling. Jeremiah had no choice in his stature, parentage, or profession. Those decisions were made by the Lord before he was born.

We learn that God knew Jeremiah in the womb . . . that life begins in the womb . . . that our life is not an accident . . . that our life has purpose . . . that God knows the man or woman before they are born. . . that he plants desires and talents to children . . . that much of life is predestined and **not** a matter of choice . . .

Though not as dynamic as Jeremiah, we learn that God makes choices about our profession before we are born. Whether we become an athlete, musician, teacher, doctor, attorney, plumber, or electrician, we need to thank Him for our life and appeal to our Creator to extend His blessing to us. Further, we conclude we have a duty to seek the LORD God and His will for our lives for without his blessing our sin will ruin us.

Benson adds; "That is, I had thee in my view, or approved thee as a fit minister for this work, in the same sense as it is said, Acts 15:18, *Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world;* he contemplated the plan of them, and approved it in his mind, before he created and brought them into being."

Think of it! Our genes, mind, emotions, parents, talents, childhood conflicts and opportunities were chosen by God for our good and his glory before we were born! The right to life begins in the womb, not at birth. Rights come from God, not the government.

Further, God ordained Jeremiah to be a preacher in the womb. He did not need a license from the State to preach, condemn sin by government officials, or to address uncomfortable issues sensitive to the State.

Likewise, our gifts and talents are like seeds created by God and planted in the soil of this life.

# 50. Jeremiah 17:9-14

## Sovereignty in Forgiveness

**The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?. . . Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou *art* my praise.**

Many seek God for physical healing, and many want God to heal their nation, but how many people want to be healed of their own bitterness and rebellion? Jeremiah shows us the way.

Men are often oppressed by guilt and secularists advise that men learn to forgive themselves:

> "Forgive yourself for not knowing what you didn't know before you learned it." — Maya Angelou
>
> "You must also forgive yourself. You must forgive yourself for any past mistakes and failures that you cannot forget." — Laura Aran**da**

But, men are not God. They are creatures. They have no authority to forgive themselves. Sins are against God, and men must seek Him for forgiveness.

> Genesis 18:25 You are the judge of all the earth, and you do what is right."

The Jeremiah text answers the question, "If a man is blessed for trusting in the Lord, and cursed for following man, why do men choose the path of cursedness?"

And the answer is found in the mystery of ***self-deceit*** in the "heart that blinds the man to what is good and evil.

"***deceitful***" (aqob) is in the emphatic position of the sentence. Men are easily propagandized, consumerized, and mesmerized by cultural salesmen offering circus trinkets and colored beads to the public. The wretchedness of deception is that the deceived does not know he is deceived. That one has the power to forgive himself is one of those deceptions.

The word "desperately wicked" (anash) is one word meaning "weak" or "sick" like David's child was incurably "ill" (2 Samuel 12:15).

If there is a reason not to follow Godless politicians, theoreticians, and academicians, this is it! They are the blind leading the blind, the diseased pretending to heal the sick.

**10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.**

"heart" and "reins" (kidneys) refer to workings of the soul.

To make matters worse, NO MAN knows his own heart. But, the LORD is perfectly acquainted with it, and with all the twists and turns it is capable of: He knows all its desires and designs. All its intentions, affections, and determinations lie exposed to His inspection, His eye penetrates into the dark corners of every man's soul. Because he knows the heart, He can be trusted to guide us and correct us — to expose our sin and also forgive our sin.

**11 As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.**

The Lord appeals to the knowledge of Jews regarding birds, particularly the partridge or even the cuckoo bird -- birds that abandon their nest or lay their eggs in another bird's nest abandoning them to be hatched by another (Leviticus 11:16; Deuteronomy 14:15).

The bird analogy refers to the covetous man who piles up riches through corrupt business practices that "make to themselves wings" never to be enjoyed. Using the art of deception, this slick entrepreneur collects riches only to leave them to another.

**The Hope of Israel**

The remedy for sin is not in psychology, anthropology, or sociology, but theology. Jeremiah does not order men to correct or forgive their own soul. The prophet does not recommend introspection of the heart, but inspection of the Throne on High. The remedy is not a change of officers within government on earth, but a change of government in one's heart from Heaven.

**12 A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.**

The word "***is***" is ***not*** in the original text, and should be read without the verb.

The voice is in the vocative indicating the one being addressed. He speaks in second person. Glorious High Throne is a metonym for the LORD, the Hope of Israel. He, not government nor psychology, is the place sinners find sanctuary.

Thoughts shift from the wretchedness of man to the wonders of the sovereign LORD; from one's deceitful heart to the true God. Jeremiah lifts our eyes from the human heart to Heaven; from sin to the Sanctuary; from hearts of stone to Heaven's Throne; from man's choices to God's sovereignty and authority.

Unlike pop-psychologists, Jeremiah does not send men on archaeological journeys into their past or ask them to probe their inner feelings. Rather, He points us to the One outside of the heart . . . on the throne . . . in Heaven from where He administrates the affairs of the universe. "The LORD reigns" is the gospel of the Old Testament (Psalm 97:1).

No, Christ as a Divine Person does not live inside the human heart. He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father as the glorified Lord-Christ. He dwells within only in the sense men have faith. Even then, it is not faith in the heart as a virtue that makes men righteous, but faith in the accomplishments of Christ at the cross that justifies sinners (Romans 5:1).

**13 O LORD, the hope of Israel. All that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.**

We have a dramatic shift in this address from second person ("*O LORD*") and ("*all that forsake thee*") to first [person ("*they that depart from me*"), and from first person to third person ("***they*** have forsaken the LORD").

The word "*forsake*" (azab) means "to leave alone," "abandon," or "neglect." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 12:3)?

The word "*ashamed*" (buwsh) refers to being found naked before God (Genesis 2:25: 3:1-16).

"*written in the earth*" suggest those that abandon the *Fountain of Living Waters* (2:13) belong to earth and not heaven. There is a "Lamb's Book of Life." Is your name in it?

The hope of Israel was not in a new government administration, a change of guards, or in some political revolution, but in getting right with the sovereign Lord.

Like Israel our hope is not in new statutes, codes, and regulations. It is not in politicians or psychologists, but in the one, personal, infinite, triune God of Scripture - the "LORD." The remedy for sin is not political, but spiritual; not the economy, but theonomy; not in seeking the will of man, but in seeking the the healing of the LORD God.

If Jeremiah were preaching in New Testament times he might put it this way; "The highly –exalted, resurrected Christ full of glory sitting at the right of the Father on the Throne of Grace has defeated Satan, sin, and death. He is my Hope, your Hope, and the Hope of the World. Believe in Him."

> Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
>
> Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

> Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
>
> Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
>
> Revelation 22:1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Those that forsake God shall be ashamed (discovered naked); those that seek Him shall be honored. Those that forsake the Lord shall be written in the earth; those that cling to Him shall have their names written in Heaven. Those that forsake the Lord shall wake up thirsty in hell, but those that trust Him shall be refreshed by the Fountain of Living Waters.

**The Sinner's Prayer**

**14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.**

Only one man responded to Jeremiah's sermon, and that was Jeremiah. As all good preachers, this pastor followed his own advice.

"*Heal me*" (raphani) -- the imperative, the language of prayer. The One who forgives is the LORD. He is called "Jehovah Rapha" in Exodus 15: 25b-26, "*For I am the Lord who heals you*." This title was announced to Israel at the bitter waters of Marah and where Moses threw in a tree to purify the alkaline pond -- a type of the cross — a lesson on the sovereignty of God in forgiveness. Only the Creator Judge can forgive sin.

This wilderness area exposed two problems: (1) bitterness in the waters of Marah, and (2) marah (bitterness) in the hearts of the people. God healed the waters, but the people needed to be healed of their bitterness and complaining: "So the people grumbled against Moses . . ." but they did not pray that God would heal them.

The word "marah" is translated "rebelled against thee" in Psalm 5:10 and "provoking (marah) the most High in the wilderness" in Psalm 78:17.

The object of the verb "rapha" is not the nation but "me." Jeremiah prayed that God would heal him. He no authority to forgive himself. None!

Jeremiah contrasted himself with the deserters. In this text he focuses on his own need for healing and salvation. This is not a self-righteous, "better-than-thou" prophet. He too was a sinner that needed healing. The prophet obeyed his own message and trusted the Lord. Unlike the apostates, Jeremiah knew where

to go to find a cure for his own sin -- the LORD, the Hope of Israel, the One on the Throne, the Fountain of Living Waters. Because of the Lord's wondrous grace, Jeremiah called God "His Praise." This pious man prayed, "Save me, Oh LORD, and I will be saved."

Do not be deceived. Look at the cross. Repent and seek Christ. He is the sovereign Forgiver of man's sins. Surrender to His authority, and you will enter his kingdom.

# 51. Jeremiah 27:5-6

## Gifts of Power

**"I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon . . . "**

Men in government seem to have an insatiable appetite to stay in power at any cost.

Representatives of the surrounding nations may have come to Jerusalem to urge the king to throw off the yoke of Babylon. Jehoiakim and the kings around him were so obsessed with preserving power they were deaf to the war drums pounding around them.

The times called for submission to foreign rule, not revolt.

In order to knock some sense into these kings, God ordered Jeremiah to make "*bonds and yokes*" and send them to neighboring kings as a dynamic, visual illustration of their coming defeat and enslavement.

God referencing His own supreme power is in order to refute the pride of those who rely on their own power (Isaiah 45:12) (JFB Commentary).

The word "*kings*" includes rulers, governors, senators, government officials, ambassadors, representatives, prime ministers, and other heads of state.

The word "give" generally means to transfer, yield, or bestow possession, ownership, or authority of property or rights to another; that is, the Lord expanded Babylon's jurisdiction to include Palestine and the surrounding nations.

This text contains the dramatic command of God ordering Jeremiah to make icons of bondage and to send them to Tyre, Edom, Moab, Zidon, and Judah (Zedekiah) with the message of Jeremiah 27:5 dramatizing the Babylonian invasion into these countries. God ordained these territories be conquered, the people decimated, and given to Babylon.

The pronoun "I" is in the emphatic position. "I" made the earth and no other god, force, or power. The agent of this power is His "outstretched arm" — a personified metaphor emphasized in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 26:8)

**The lesson is clear**: Man, animals, plants and the soil in which they grow are created by the power and wisdom of God. The Maker of the earth is also the Founder and Arbitrator of the nations, their boundaries, and limitations.

The riches of a nation are a gift of God and each should rejoice in Him and be content. Thus, we must ask: Is there a greater sin against the authority of the Lord than the Western ambition of conquering nations like Russia, China, and Iran, exploiting their resources, and dividing them into weaker, manageable states?

By His right and His authority this sovereign Lord disposes of the earth and its golden riches. He appoints kings and removes kings. He marshals these kingdoms as He pleases. The peoples are merely tenants of the land and enjoy lease rights under the disposition of His grace. See Amos 4:13; and 9:6.

The territories of nations, their natural resources, and boundaries are assets that can be given and taken away in a moment of time at His pleasure.

Fear God and surrender to Babylon is the message of Jeremiah to the people.

The conquest of Babylon and the subsequent defeat of the nations are proof claim that the Lord is God; proof that He gives nations power to conquer another; that He raises them up and pulls them down; that is, their victories and defeats are is in His hand.

> "Whatever any have of the good things of this world, it is what God sees fit to give; we should therefore be content . . . The things of this world are not the best things, for the Lord often gives the largest share to bad men. Dominion is not founded in grace. Those who will not serve the God who made them, shall justly be made to serve their enemies that seek to ruin them" (Matthew Henry).

# 52. Jeremiah 32:17

**Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:**

The first word in the sentence is "ah" much like English "Oh!" —an expression of relief or pain.

Jeremiah addresses the Creator as "Lord" (Adonai), expressing the majestic position of the Creator as his "master;" and "YHWH" or "LORD," the personal name of the Creator that expresses His fullness and sufficiency to men, "I am that I am."

The particle "behold" commands the attention of the reader. Jeremiah attributes the creation of heaven and earth to His power. Personifying the Lord with an "outstretched arm" draws an image in our mind regarding the engineering feat and competence of the Lord in creating the world with all its marvels and mysteries.

Using deductive reasoning Jeremiah concludes that since the LORD God created all things seen and unseen, light and dark, big and small **nothing** is impossible for him! The word "hard" (pala') can be translated, "nothing is too wonderful for You;" that is, God does what He pleases and nothing wonderful is too hard for Him (27:5).

Thus, His sovereignty, solitariness, and omnipotence are the grounds of all prayer.

Therefore, Jeremiah adds these additional insights regarding God's sovereignty.

By His sovereignty and great power, His loving kindness extends to all His creatures:

> 18 Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, *is* his name,

By His sovereignty and great power, God hears the prayers of all men giving to each what is good in His eyes

> 19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes *are* open upon **all** the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

By His sovereignty and great power, the LORD delivered the Hebrews out of the land of Egypt.

> 20 Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, and in Israel, and among *other* men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day;
>
> 21 And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror;

By His sovereignty and great power, He gave the Hebrews the land of Palestine . . . for a season until 70 A.D.

> 22 And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;

By His sovereignty and great power and sovereign justice, He brought the Babylonian captivity on the people.

> 23 And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:

Matthew Henry adds this application: "Whatever trouble we are in, personal or public, we may comfort ourselves that the Lord sees it, and knows how to remedy it."

He is a light in a dark room a steady hand on a trembling shoulder; a warm blanket on a cold night; hope in the midst of a storm.

# 53. Jeremiah 45:5

## Seek Not Great Things for Thyself

**And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.**

Q: Are your expectations too high?

This passage was addressed to Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, circa 605-604 BC - the first year of the Babylonian conquest over the Levant.

Baruch was charged with the duty of writing Jeremiah's prophecy and then delivering it to the people on the special "fast day" in the 9th month of the Hebrew calendar (Nov-Dec). The scroll announced the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. When Jehoiachin heard the reading of the scroll, he ordered it to be shredded and burned it in the fire -- an inexcusable act that sealed his doom (Jeremiah 36).

Baruch suffered two afflictions: (1) the sorrows of impending implosion of the nation he loved - "The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land" (Jeremiah 45:4);

and, (2) the sorrows connected with his personal struggles . . . even driven into hiding from the king's police force - "Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest" (Jeremiah 26 and Jeremiah 45:3).

It was during this time, the Lord commissioned Jeremiah to deliver a message of comfort and warning to Baruch: "And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."

We are not told what "great" things Baruch sought for himself, only that his expectations were not appropriate for the times.

From this we learn the following:

(1) Baruch became discouraged when he had to hide from Jehoiachin's arrest order.

Likewise, we are easily discouraged by our first encounters with overt oppression from government:

> "Young beginners in religion are apt to be discouraged with little difficulties, which they commonly meet with at first in the service of God." (Matthew Henry).

Those who expect much from government will be disappointed in government. Where government is god in the minds of God's people, you cannot expect them not to betray you . . . and they did betray Baruch.

(2) Baruch suffered from a stoked furnace of ambition.

Likewise, we often suffer from too high of expectations of people, government rulers, and churchmen. We must lower our expectations of our fellow-citizens and church members or we will be forced to endure a kettle of frustration (Hebrews 12:13ff). Ambitions must be tempered for the times.

(3) Like Baruch, we are often over ambitious and self-seeking.

We might ask Baruch, "When the whole nation is being driven to destruction, do you expect to be exempt from difficulty?" As Baruch had too high expectations in his doomed generation, we also may suffer from too high of expectations in our world . . . in our marriage . . . in our ministry.

(4) It is foolish to seek wealth and pleasure in a world devouring itself with indulgence and excesses.

Normally, ambition for a young man is good. But, it was ill-timed of Baruch to expect great things for himself when God was judging the nations around him. Likewise, we should not expect security in a world where everything is amiss and nothing is certain.

(5) If we have the necessities of life, let us therewith be happy:

The sovereign God gave Baruch a promise — his life as a prey; that is, during this period of horrific judgment Baruch's life would be spared. Suvival was itself a reward.

> "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:8).

(6) The message to Baruch was not only for Baruch, but for Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:1-5; 15:10-18) -- a common affliction of the saints in every age.

The message was designed to make Baruch better and not bitter, glad and not mad, content and not malcontent, alert and not distracted.

(7) God's message to Baruch was not designed to relieve him of responsibilities.

He had duties that needed to be discharged. But, climbing up the career ladder was not in the forecast.

The grand lesson in this chapter is that we must adjust our expectations (not our standards) based on the trammels of our times. God's man must adapt to his circumstances, lower his expectations, and focus on his God-given assignment. Piety is always in style in every generation.

There is a time to study, and a time to stop studying.

There is a time to start a business, and a time to retire from business.

There is a time to get married and a time not to marry.

And, as Solomon taught us,

> "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3).

Like Jeremiah, Baruch had to trust God and his sovereign will for his life. He had no choice as to the time in which he was born and that time required Baruch to let go of ambition and to rejoice in His promises.

Study your ambitions. Discern the times in which you live, and where you are in the seasons of life. Discern God's will for you and rest in His providence. Be at peace with your calling as peace is the means of conquering evil (Romans 16:20; Hebrews 13:20).

# 54. Lamentations 3:37–39

## The Source of the Good and the Bad

**"Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?"**

Struggling to believe God in the midst of troubles?

Consider the sovereignty of God as the Spirit lays down a new foundation of faith – the fulfillment of His promises.

The "*Who*" refers to political pundits prone to act as prognosticators regarding future events.

Media personalities have an idolatrous interest in controlling the future and do so regularly by making predictions about the future. Most predictions are like bad checks that always bounce. Sometimes they get it right -- **not** because they have the extraordinary gifts of a seer, but because the Lord orchestrated the event.

Arrogant heads of state may boast of their power to impact political events, but only the living God has the authority and the power to order future events and to bring it to pass; that is, He does what He pleases. Providence controls history.

Men are prone to attribute good things from God, and bad thing to the Devil. But, this text corrects the matter. *He is the Source of "good and bad,"* positives and negatives, ups and downs, blessings and curses. The evil which the Lord permits is under the control of His holy purpose. While God is **never** the source of moral evil, He is the Source of natural and political disasters.

He creates good that we might enjoy Him and praise Him; He creates negative things like the Babylonian Captivity that we might release our grip on idols and seek Him. Man needs to be weaned from self-dependence and to grow in God dependence; to reject the Arminian position that success is a matter of

human choices; and, to adopt the view that God is sovereign and that men succeed and fail based on His will.

> The Lord makes men the instruments of his vengeance when he sees fit, so he can restrain their cruelty whenever he pleases (Benson).

God does **not** desire pain in our misfortunes. But equally true is it that they do not happen without his express permission (Pulpit Commentary).

> *"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." - Isaiah 45:7*
>
> *"Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" - Amos 3:6.*

**"Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?"**

Benson says,

> "No calamity or trouble befalls us, but what is the due reward of our sins; and is designed as a chastisement for them."

The NT equivalent of Benson's premise is Hebrews 12: 6, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

In a Christian mind governed by His Word, all trials proceed from grace not to punish us (believers), but to purify and perfect us as sons. If we view affliction as discipline from the loving hand of the Father, it will prevent us from falling into the sin of bitterness murmuring and complaining against the providence of God.

# 55. Daniel 2:20-22

## Knowing and Doing

**"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.**

News anchors are in a tither about world events. To many, Armageddon is just around the corner. Every evening these Arminian minds tell us the world is out of control, and that we've got to do something . . . anything to change the political climate: vote, protest, write, call, riot, scream and holler. Something! Anything!

God gave Daniel the interpretation of the king's perplexing dream. The dream revealed political powers are governed by the wisdom and power of God; that He changes the times and the seasons, summer and winter, rains and droughts, rulers and regimes. Wisdom and knowledge, light and understanding are gifts of Providence.

As the Source and Fountain of all knowledge, He knows secret things, deep things, and hidden things obscured by darkness. Because God is light, He reveals knowledge to men . . . not all, but some. Moreover, He knows all things and has never learned anything. Golden Babylonian conquests, silver Persians rulers and their stringent law-order, the bronze Hellenization of the known world, and the iron-clay Pax Romana left their marks in history at the pleasure of the God of Israel.

Jerry Brides adds this insight:

> "In a sermon entitled "God's Providence," C. H. Spurgeon said, "Napoleon once heard it said, that man proposes and God disposes. 'Ah,' said Napoleon, 'but I propose and dispose too.' How do you think he proposed and disposed? He proposed to go and take Russia; he proposed to make all Europe his. He proposed to destroy that power, and how did he come back again? How had he disposed it? He came back solitary and alone, his mighty army perished and wasted, having well-nigh eaten and devoured one another through hunger. *Man proposes and God disposes*."

# 56. Daniel 4:35

## No Back Talking Allowed

**"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"**

Ever taken the class, "Cattle Grazing 101"? God enrolled King Nebuchadnezzar in this course and it took him seven years to learn verse 35.

"*All inhabitants*" refers to the nations on earth and international politics as the coveted crown-jewel of power among men.

The Global Wealth Report (2023) reported the total wealth of mankind to be about 454.4 trillion dollars.

Who is not impressed by the great Cities of London, Paris, New York, Moscow, and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Tokyo Japan, and Singapore? But on God's scale, he counts these impressive cities as nothing -- as dust on the plate of the fulcrum (Isaiah 40:15).

This text informs us that the Lord commands the hosts (armies) of heaven. Here the heavens are viewed as a massive army standing ready to obey the Creator's order. The Creator commands and his creation obeys. But, will his creatures do the same?

Something is desperately wrong with the "**inhabitants of the earth**." Evil surrounds us. It is in us. Men are in rebellion against the Creator. The answer is not a superman seeking "truth, justice, and a better tomorrow," but the Great I Am. Therefore, we *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"* and pray, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*."

**Q**: This conflict between heaven and earth raises the question, "Who is in control: "*the inhabitants of the earth" or the LORD God?"*

We are led to believe that rich, powerful men are in control of day-to-day politics, but King Nebuchadnezzar answers the question: He "does according to his will among the 'inhabitants of the earth;" that is, history is under the supremacy and control of Almighty God. Thus, the man who thinks he can oppose God is like the little Russian boy who thought he could stop a 17,838 horsepower, Novocherkassk 4E5K locomotive by putting a copper nickel on the RR track.

**The lesson is clear**: Those approving of His will are powerless to establish His will on earth. He does not need the approval of angels or men. He is the

unshackled Sovereign. The kingdom grows in secret while men sleep (Mark 4:26-29); and those opposed to His will are powerless to prevent it. Wise men, therefore, would do well to surrender to his law-order now for "*none can stay (smite) upon his hand.*" No back talking allowed.

# 57. Daniel 4:32, 5:21

## You're Not in Charge

**"Daniel 4:32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will . . . . And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."**

My sister has a granddaughter that tends to be very bossy. One day grandma grabbed her little cheeks and said, "Betsy . . . not in charge!"

Nebuchadnezzar learned this the hard way: "Nebuchadnezzar not in charge!"

God's sovereignty encompasses all the leaders of government, no matter how righteous or evil, competent or foolish.

When King Nebuchadnezzar's heart swelled with pride like a hot-air balloon, God punctured his blimp.

The miracle in this text is not that Nebuchadnezzar was made to act like an animal and then came to his senses, but the marvelous restraint God placed on his ambitious cabinet. What a wonder some enterprising officer didn't killed the man in his state of weakness and vulnerability!

To Nebuchadnezzar's credit, he humbled himself and acknowledged the sovereignty of God in the affairs of state.

It took seven years of cattle grazing to undue his pride and to humble the man, but God's grazing management plan worked.

It was said of his arrogant son, Belshazzar: "*God numbered his kingdom, and finished it*" (5:26).

# 58. Habakkuk 1:2-13

**1:2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! *even* cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou wilt not save!**

**1:6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces *that are* not theirs.**

**1:12 *Art* thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.**

Habakkuk was so burdened down by the sins of his people, he filed his complaint against the providence of God (610-605). When God spoke, it was not the answer he was hoping for – that the LORD would judge His people using the Chaldeans to humble and decimated the nation (1:6-11). Ouch!

His second complaint was why God would use a more wicked nation to punish Israel, the more righteous nation. The response was simple: once God used the cruel Babylonians to chastise Israel, he would bring a terrible judgment upon the rod of His anger.

One of the characteristics of the Babylonians was that they attributed their success to their own strength (1:11), a common sin among rulers (Isaiah 12:10-13); that is, they thought the power of their empire was due to their own military might, prowess, and wisdom.

The same is true today. America attributes its empire to its own wisdom, military, and policies.

Tyrants tend to attribute their victories and dominion to their own power (Isaiah 12:10-13).

America needs to learn a lesson from Habakkuk— that any world-wide influence it has is from the LORD who ordains. Because He is sovereign, He can give it; and, He can take it away. Power is not from feckless CONgress, a fickle judiciary, or a flawed president, but from the omnipresent muscle and might of Providence.

# 59. Zechariah 4:6

## God Has What You Need

**"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."**

An angelic messenger made this statement to Zechariah before the second blast of energy to re-engage temple construction in 420 BC during the reconstruction period (535-516 BC) and before the completion of the second temple in 516 BC -- approximately 108 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 72 feet high in a temple complex area of approximately 179,000 square yards (37 acres).

The Lord employed **Haggai** and **Zechariah** to motivate His discouraged remnant to complete the Herculean task of temple construction. The LORD used Zechariah to show the nation that Joshua, the ecclesiastical leader, and Zerubbabel, the civil leader, would be infused with authority and power to rebuild the temple; that is, they were the two olives trees that God used to fuel the candlestick, the iconic symbol of the glory of the temple in Jerusalem.

Because modern man is intoxicated with Arminianism and the doctrines of "free will," self-determinism, "Yes, we can," and the view that "life is a matter of choices," this verse stands out like a rose on a thorn bush.

The Lord of Hosts (armies) informs Zechariah the temple would indeed be completed, but not by the wisdom, fortitude, and power of man, but by the power and assets of God's Spirit at work among the people.

Nowhere does Scripture teach that men are the captains of their souls or the masters of their fate.

> *Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, **but of God that sheweth mercy**.*

This text does not deny that life involves choices, but it does reinforce the first cause by Him Who makes it "*willing in the day of his power*;" - Psalm 110:3. Yes, decisions are a part of life, but the wise consider His movements and His purpose at the time of decision.

God's work grows by His power. If Zechariah were alive today, he would say, "not by money, not by silver and gold, not by programs, and not by passionate personalities in politics but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts."

# 60. Malachi 3:6

## The Ultimate Assurance of Salvation

**Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.**

In politics the word "change" has magical powers for wanta-be candidates: "Change We Need," "Change We Can Believe In" (Obama), "It's Time for Change".

The good news of Malachi is the unchangeableness of the Lord.

The Book of Malachi begins with the promise of God's sovereign, eternal love toward Jacob, and feckless Israel doubting His love (1:2).

The ultimate assurance of God's unconditional love is grounded on His unchanging election and Divine character (Malachi 1:2-3; 3:6).

The title "LORD" is God's covenant name referring to Jehovah (YHWH).

"not" is an adverb negating the verb "change" (shanah) which means to alter, transform, or mutate; that is, the Lord does **not** evolve, morph, improve, diminish, reform, or alter.

This message is for the sons of Jacob — no one loved this patriarch but the LORD. Elohim loved Jacob, not because Jacob was lovable, but because He is a God of love – because He chose to love this man.

Jacob changes, backslides, evolves, digresses, progresses, and deforms, but God does **not**.

The text teaches us that the salvation of His elect is **not** due to their choices and unwavering devotion to the Father; but due to the devotion and unchanging nature of His election. Men are not saved by changing, but trusting the God who does not change.

God loved Jacob and chose him . . . not because Jacob was lovable, but because He chose to love Yaakov; that is, think of this personal God as our infinite, eternal, changeless Father who loves us with an eternal love.

The LORD's character does **not** change; that is, he is always just, merciful, and kind toward us . . . even when we are weak, feeble, and struggling with faith:

> "Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?" (1:2-3)

His promises do **not** rot, fade, or rust. In fact, all man's hopes find their ultimate fulfillment in the Son, the cross, and his resurrection from the dead (2 Corinthians 1:20).

His means, agencies, and mechanisms may change, but His position in the universe does **not** change. He is Lord, Master, and Sovereign in His affairs with men.

For example, in Matthew 16 our Lord announced the end of Israel as an instrument of God and His election to institute the church His agency of extending the kingdom of God. His purpose to save men did not change, but the stewardship of gospel proclamation was given to "spiritual Israel." Unbelieving Jews were pruned from the tree of privileges and believing Gentiles were grafted into holy service; in other words, the church became His candlestick (Revelation 1:20).

"therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed:" This grand statement passes on a hope to the remnant that though wavering Jacob and his circumstances seemed uncertain, the Lord does **not** change; therefore, we are not consumed . . . but more than this, we are saved, preserved, and protected by the unwavering, invincible power of the LORD God.

Because He is sovereign and changeless, His love for us in Christ does not diminish. Thus, His unchanging character and position in the universe forms the foundation of our confidence, trust, service, rest, and joy.

Though we change and waver in our faith, His elections for our good stand firm and compacted. His unalterable nature negates all imperfection and all dependence on circumstances. His love does **not** waiver, vary, or become exhausted. It is not subject to vagary or caprice; that is, He is the unchanging fountain of light and lasting foundation of eternal hope.

Thus, we have resolute assurance that in the midst of political change, spasms, contradictions, and revolution, the river of God's love toward us is not dependent on government or our choices, progress of character, determination, and faithfulness to Him. This river of love flowing from the throne of His grace does not decrease, diminish, decline, or dwindle because of our instability, inconstancy, and unreliability (See Ezekiel 47). Because "**I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.}**

He is the bush that burns and is not consumed; the rock that follows us in this pilgrim journey (1 Corinthians 10:4); the lighthouse in the middle of the storm; the north star that does not move; the bedrock beneath our celestial city; the old oak tree that never dies.

> "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).
>
> "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19).
>
> "He fainteth not, nor is weary" (Isaiah 40:28).

"I will not alter the thing that has gone out of my lips" (Psalm 89:34).

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself” (Hebrews 6:13).

"That by two immutable (unalterable) things (His promise; His oath), in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation (comfort)” (Hebrews 6:17-18).

## Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing - Robert Robinson

1. Come Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.

2. Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

3. O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

# 61. Matthew 10:29–31

## His Eye is on the Sparrow

**"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."**

Do you have fears about the future? Most of us do.

How valuable are you? Jesus builds upon the Father's omniscience and omnipresence to relieve fears.

**Sparrows** were the smallest offering presented in worship, and a "*penny*" was the smallest coin in Hebrew currency -- a tenth part of a drachma, or a day's wages.

Jesus claimed the Father knows every detail regarding His small creatures. He attends the funeral of every tiny sparrow, humming bird, and dove; and, he counts the hairs on our head every day.

Christ reasons from the lesser to the greater. If the Father loves these common little creatures and knows all about them, how much more does he love you and me? He not only knows the intricacies of His little creatures, He numbers every heart beat and breath that we take. No wonder David said, "*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.*"

# 62. Matthew 28:19-10

## 100% Authority

**"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."**

**Need power?**

**Christians need power, but more importantly they need authority to conduct their work on earth — authority greater than the State and its police force.**

**Known as the "Great Commission," this text spawned the missionary movements of the church in every nation on earth. Because Christ has been given dominion, Christians have authority to go anywhere in the world to preach the gospel; meaning, the work of the gospel is performed under the absolute, sovereign authority of the risen Christ and does not need the approval of government to conduct its business.**

**The verb "*is given*" is an aorist tense implying the Father bestowed "*all authority*" upon Christ prior to Him issuing this commission. He has jurisdiction over all men and all nations.**

**The adjective "*all*" implies total, complete, absolute jurisdiction over all men and all governments. Having this authority, our Lord issues His commission for Christians to proclaim the gospel of His kingdom to all nations within the four corners of the earth. Moreover, Jesus envisioned that whole nations would believe the gospel and surrender to His authority.**

**As long as Christians conduct their ministry with reason and integrity no government, city council, or police force has jurisdiction to regulate, control, manage, supervise, ban, prohibit, sanction, or legislate rules for the gospel ministry of the church.**

**"Free speech zones" are null and void under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Understanding this, the Founding Father prohibited federal and state governments from controlling the establishment of religion (the Christian gospel).**

Amendment I

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

No law means no regulation, no code, and no statute can abrogate the authority of the Great Commission.

Be a lighthouse in the storm. Claim your authority and proclaim, "The Lord reigns."

# 63. Luke 1:46-55

## The Lord Dethrones Despots

**" . . . From generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones But has lifted up the humble . . ."**

So powerful is Mary's Magnificat, it has been banned from being sung in church by governments trembling at its implications. Her words about bringing down potentates and God's preference toward the poor were dangerously revolutionary to many regimes.

Enemy Love website exposed the world's hostility to Mary's Magnifcat:

> "During the British rule of India, the Magnificat was prohibited from being sung in church. In the 1980s, Guatemala's government discovered Mary's words about God's preferential love for the poor to be too dangerous and revolutionary. The song had been creating quite the stirring amongst Guatemala's impoverished masses. Mary's words were inspiring the Guatemalan poor to believe that change was indeed possible. Thus their government banned any public recitation of Mary's words. Similarly, after the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo—whose children all disappeared during (1974-1983) — placed the Magnificat's words on posters throughout the capital plaza, the military junta of Argentina outlawed any public display of Mary's song.

Let's avoid a dreamy reading of this passage and examine why so many rulers have seen her song as subversive and revolutionary.

**Luke 1:52 "He hath put down the mighty from their seats (thrones), and exalted them of low degree."**

In verse 52, the word "*might*" (dunastas) is translated "*of great authority*" in Acts 8:27. We get the English word "*dynasty*" from this Greek word. Paul applies *dunastas* to Christ as "the blessed and only potentate (dunastes)" (1 Timothy 6:15). The point of the statement is that God smashes wicked political dynasties and raises up simple, righteous men to take their place.

"*their seats*" is better translated as "*thrones*" associated with the citadels of power.

Perhaps Mary was thinking of the defeat of Pharaoh (1450 BC), Amalek (1445 (B.C), Adonibezek (Judges 1:5-7), Sisera (Judges 4), Agag (1 Samuel 15:32-33), Saul (1000 BC), Elah (909 BC),Baasha (886 BC), Ahab 853 BC) (Ahaziah (853),

Zimri (885 BC), Omri (874 BC), Ahaz (715 BC), Jeconiah (597 BC) Belshazzar (539 BC), Zedekiah (586 BC), Alexander the Great (323 BC), Antiochus Epiphanes (164 BC), and even Julius Caesar (44 BC).

Up until this time, the world was bullied by despotic kings, princes, and Caesars. But, with the conception of Christ in the womb of Mary, and the birth of John to his Father Zacharias, history pivoted "on a dime."

With the forerunner on earth, the kingdom of God intersected history, not to take global dominion of the earth, but to save sinners and to provide proof of the eschatological hope and judgment to come.

Kings are dethroned; beggars are made sons of God. That the Lord favors the humble poor and shows contempt for pompous-princes strikes a blow to the heart of kings. Men endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights limit the powers of every government on earth. "God-given rights" makes sovereigns of ordinary men.

Knowing the promises of the Savior-King-Messiah and with the eye of faith, Mary announced the defeat of God's enemies (Satan, sin, and death) as well as the crushing collapse of pompous rulers and kings to come; which is to say, He is sovereign in the affairs of politics.

Thomas Kempt (15th century) observed the rule, "*Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit*" (Latin) or "Man proposes, God disposes"— a proverb meaning humans make plans, but ultimate outcomes are decided by divine providence. What a reminder that State control is limited, and official plans can be thwarted, changed, or terminated.

By way of application, consider how God used Iran to clips the wings of American imperialism in a matter of weeks (2026).

# 64. John 17:2

**"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."**

Jesus announces His sovereignty over the affairs of men at the most in opportune time. On the eve of his crucifixion He proclaimed that He had authority over all flesh.

The Arminian mind tends to emphasize the necessity of human choice in matters of salvation, but Christ emphasized the sovereignty of God when he said, "*whom thou hast given men*." That God choses men (his elect) and gives them to Christ is declared as a fact at least seven times in His prayer (17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24 *2).

Yes, choice is involved in following Christ, but not unless God has chosen them first.

Those who advocate an  Arminian choice-based theology do not understand the disaster of the fall – that sin impacted the spirit, soul, and body – that man's will is so bound to his own sin, he cannot believe unless God disrupts the magnetic forces that bind the will to sin.

# 65. John 19:10-11

## Limited Authority

**"Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power (authority) to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?**

**Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power (authority) at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."**

Think that you are in control? Think again.

Our Lord possessed a rare knowledge of men; that is, He did not consider men to be better than they actually are.

"Speakest thoug not unto me" is the voice of pride . . . of feelings of superiority . . . a talking down to Jesus as if He were a worm.

"unto me" is in the emphatic position indicating that Pilate took umbrage at Jesus's statement; that he thought of himself as greater than Christ.

Some MSS reverse the order: "have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee; "meaning "thy life is in my power . . . and Thy death also."

Jesus knew Pilate and understood that he was not as good or as powerful as Pilate thought himself to be. He understood this Roman governor was made of tensile, and that he that would yield to the pressures of the mob.

He knew the madness of the apostate Jewish rulers, and that they were not going to let go of their grisly plans to crucify Him.

Pilate mistakenly thought he was in control of the riot in Jerusalem and miscalculated the malignant jealousy at work in the hearts of Jewish leaders.

Our Lord corrected the Roman governor by informing him that this matter was out of his hands; that he did not have the power or principle to resist the mob as he thought he had.

Moreover, Jesus knew that it was the will of the Father for him to go to the cross and that the political tensions in the air worked to fulfill God's purpose "*from the foundation of the world*."

# 66. Acts 4: 24-28

## Cogs in the Wheel

**"Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is . . . The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth ("in this city") against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."**

Facing political pit bulls in opposition to your ministry?

Before us are the great doctrines of creation, sovereignty, foreknowledge, and prophetic fulfillment.

Following their release from custody, the disciples seem driven by a strange power. Knowing they had been trapped by government agents furious about the report of Christ rising from the dead, they realized their arrest was a product of the hostility of rulers against the LORD predicted in Psalm 2.

Lifting up their voices in prayer, they acknowledge (1) the sovereignty of God in His creation; (2) that the "*roaring*" of the rulers against their preaching was really an expression of their animus against the LORD; (3) that Christ is truly God's "*anointed*" Messiah; and, (4) that the actors on stage in the theater of Jerusalem were God's instruments to fulfill His redemptive plan forged in the mind of God before the foundation of the world.

What a stunning revelation to learn that Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish hostiles pounding the gavel for Christ's crucifixion were merely marionettes in the hand of the Eternal Puppet Master. These animated governors thought they were ridding the earth of Christ; today, because they were used to fulfill the Messianic promises, His name and sovereignty is revered in every country of the world by men of faith.

Thus, for those with eyes to see, history is really a catalogue of "thy counsel determined before to be done."

# 67. Acts 17:23-25

## Beware of False Theologies

**"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions (sebasma), I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (17:23).**

**"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;" (17:24-25).**

Seeing the idols, Paul's heart moved and his mouth popped open.

He introduces the Athenians to Biblical Theology. The Greeks lived in a multi-universe thinking their gods were finite like men. Making their own gods, they put them in man-made temples.

"Seeing that he is Lord" is better translated, "He being Lord."

Observe how the Holy Spirit assigns God masculine pronouns in the Holy Scriptures: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallow be thy name;" **not**, "Our parent or Mother Who art in heaven . . . "

There is a strong contrast between the masculine noun "*Theos*" (God) in verse 25 with the neuter, plural noun "*sebasmata*" translated "devotions" or "objects of worship" in verse 23. Think of the Greek goddess "Athena." Men tend to emasculate the Creator assigning Him feminine qualities — a severe, radical distortion of Theology. See the goddesses Devis and Shakti in Hinduism, the religion of feminism in America, and the corrupt neuter-gender Bible —a religion that creates girly-men and odious women. Even "Hail Marys" are a radical perversion within Christianity that exposes men's tendency to feminize true religion.

Notice the two negations in this text – "*dwelleth not in temples* . . . " and "*not worshipped with human hands . . .*" As a corrective, Paul taught that the true God created "heaven and earth;" that He is an infinite Being who does **not** live in temples made by men (17:24); that He has no need of temples seeing He created heaven and earth; that is, He is bigger than anything man can build. No man-made structure can contain Him nor would He be pleased with any of them.

"*human hands*" is imagery for sculpturing physical idols. It has been observed that God created man, and that man has returned the favor creating his own conceptions of what God should be like.

The true God is everywhere and nowhere; that is, He is **not** confined to a particular temple or place; that is, there is **no** place on earth a man can find God, but where ever a man finds himself, God can be found. He is at the center of everything and the circumference of nothing — and those that seek Him find Him to be the center of their needs.

> *"this truth places the sacredness of Christian churches on a ground entirely different from that which influenced the minds of Jew or Greek in regard to their respective temples." – Ellicott.*

Further, while God created the heavens and the earth, He is not part of His creation. He remains separate from matter. One difference between Hinduism and Christianity is that Hinduism could not separate God from creation; i.e. to kill a cow is to kill a part of God. A Biblical man knows that when he smacks a rock with a sledgehammer, he is not hitting God.

The Athenians saw their hand-made gods as demanding deities with insatiable appetites, but Paul set Theos correctly. The true God is not a taker but a Giver; not a beggar, but a Benefactor. While we seem to need everything; He needs nothing.

Ellicott records the following Latin Epicurean statement:

> *"Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri, Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira."*
>
> *["Strong in itself, it needeth nought of ours, Is neither won by gifts, nor moved by wrath."]*
>
> *Lucret. ii. 649-50.*

The Lord is not better for our worship, but we are made better by worshiping Him. God is not enhanced by church buildings, but the saints are improved by meeting together in churches. In the Christian mind, God does not dwell in temples, but when Christians gather together they become a temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22). Today, God dwells in the hearts of Christian men by faith, not in church-sanctuaries – not in temples made by human hands.

# 68. Acts 17:26-27

## No Trespassing

**"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"**

A Jewish racist? Not Paul the apostle.

If the previous verse records Paul's theology, this verse records Paul's view on anthropology and the history of mankind.

No doubt the Athenians saw themselves as superior to the Barbarians and slaves in the Greek / Roman Empire.

In Paul's view, humanity is **not** the result of some big explosion, a biological accident, millenniums of supposed evolutionary development, or the ingenuity of the collective. The earth is not billions of years old — what a fraud! Paul's view of history follows the Genesis account. The history of mankind began with a single man; that is, men have more in common with each other than they have differences! Since one God created all races from one man, then all men have value; all share common interests; and, since all have the same Creator, all men ought to seek Him.

"*Blood*" refers to races and nations.

"*allotted periods*" refers to the rise and fall of empires in history.

"*boundaries of their dwelling places*" refers to national borders produced by mountainous terrain or bodies of water. God creates boundaries as "No Trespassing" signs.

Difference in cultures is caused by the separation of nations due to natural boundaries, mountains, and climate. No nation or race should see itself as the *crème de la crème* or as victims of circumstance. This isolation has one purpose, *that all people groups might seek answers to life's great questions in God and not man; that homogenized secularism might not infect all nations.*

Boundaries exist to protect the sovereignty of nations; and to prevent the spread of national corruption to the ends of the earth. Separation prevents nations from uniting around the ambitions of a Nimrod; from the spread of pluralism, multiculturalism, and omnism.

The world tells us we need more government and better government, but in Paul's thinking, man's problems are not political, commercial, or racial, but spiritual.

"*he be not far from every one of us*:" The Greeks created many gods to explain the anomalies of life. Modern man creates a false dichotomy between good and evil to explain political forces. But, Paul taught that God is the center of everything and the circumference of nothing. While He is nowhere for the skeptic, He is everywhere for God-seekers.

“haply seek after him” – The verb “haply” means “perhaps.” It is in the vocative case, the case most removed from reality; implying a wish or hope. In reality, men seek the religion of Cain with beans, beets, and broccoli, and not the religion of Abel which approaches God on the bases of blood currency through Christ. But, the hope is that mankind will reject man-made religions and see His revelation of redemption through the Son.

# 69. Romans 8:28

## Good out of Calamity

**"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."**

Ever find yourself asking the questions, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

The background of this text is the announcement that the Spirit prays for the infirmities of believers and provides consolation to those feeling oppressed.

While the world seems like its ripping apart, we learn that God weaves all things together for good to those called to enter the kingdom.

**First**, Paul informs the readers that believers have knowledge—"*we have known and continue to know that (perfect tense) . . .*"

**Second**, "*we know*" that good can come out of catastrophes; that God can turn tragedies into triumph; losses into gains; weaknesses into strengths; sadness into joy; disappointments into endowments; and, "*the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs of water*" (NIVIsaiah 41:18).

**Third**, "*we know*" that God is at work (present tense) in all circumstances doing good where rulers plan evil.

**Fourth**, "*we know*" that the promise brightens the future for those who love tdhe Lord. In no way can we comfort the lawless and promise them, "Everything will turn out all right." This treasured promise belongs exclusively to God's people.

Not everything that happens to us is good, but this verse assures us that God is working in nowtime causing good to come out of every trouble.

Soul, believest thou this?

# 70. Romans 9:14-28

## The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

**"He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."**

Do you like bones? Sink your teeth into this text.

Our text deals with the subject of the sovereignty of God. Few doctrines are more despised by the natural man than the truth that God is sovereign and exercises vigorous and efficacious control over man.

R.C. Sproul points out, while Christians profess to believe in the sovereignty of God, they really believe in human choices and the sovereignty of man. "It's their choice," they say. Therefore, it behooves us to look at this text and attempt to grasp its meaning and implications.

The background of this passage is germane to Paul's intense desire to see his own people come to salvation in Christ. Most of his brethren believed that their genetic relationship to Abraham was sufficient to make a claim on God and saw no need to embrace Christ and His work at Calvary.

Paul explained that **not** all Israelites were true Israelites; that is, **not** all of Abraham's descendants "*in the flesh*" could be considered genuine children of Abraham in spirit.

Paul provides two example of his sovereignty: Ishmael (9:9), and Esau (9:10-13). That is, Ishmael and Esau were both descendants of Abraham, but the Patriarchal blessings fell to Isaac not Ishmael; and, then to Jacob and not Esau.

The dreaded implication of this fact demonstrated that not all men claiming to have a genetic relationship to Abraham are going to enter the kingdom of God; that not all physical sons of Abraham are children of God; that is, one's family heritage does not secure salvation. God does not save men based on race, but upon God-given faith.

**First Question: Is God fair and just?**

**Romans 9:14-18 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in**

**all the earth." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.**

**The Objector**

Having stated that **not** all physical descendants of Abraham are de jure children of God, and having provided two illustrations of election in Isaac and Jacob, **Paul anticipates an objection** and answers it with a question, "*Is there any injustice on God's part?*"

**First Question: Is God unjust in choosing some for salvation, but not others?**

**Paul's answer:**

**His First Example**: God was not unjust in sparing (granting a pardon to) some of the Israelites from judgment after they worshipped the golden calf.

He answers his own question with a verse from the golden calf (*eggel hazahav*) story in Exodus 32 wherein Aaron caved into the pressure of the rebels to make an idol for the nation. The golden calf apostasy was the result of Aaron's malleability to the will of the idolaters. Sound too familiar? So egregious was this transgression that Moses grinded the abominable image into powder, threw it in the stream, and made the people to drink it.

**Next**, Moses summoned volunteers to strap on their swords and to go through the camp to hack and stack the rebels. About 3,000 of the idolaters were executed. All were traitors. All were guilty. Three thousand were killed and the rest survived.

The dead were objects of wrath; the living were objects of mercy.

So, was God unjust in sparing the rest of the congregation from the sword? Paul's answer is "No!"

The LORD, by right of creation and by right of redemption, exercised total authority over the refugees from Egypt. He was not unjust in condemning some rebels to death, nor was he unfair in sparing others. It's called "*compassion*," and "*mercy*."

**From this first answer we learn an important lesson:** Paul draws a spiritual truth from the pardon issued to the surviving Israelites: Salvation does not depend on the will of man or on the efforts of men. Salvation is grounded solely in the mercy of God. He loves because of Who He is, a God of love, and not because of some alleged virtue in man's heart.

Salvation is of God and not of man! All sinners deserve to die. None can save themselves from a judgment decreed. A pardon is available, but the pardon does not reside in the will of man or his effort to secure grace. It starts and ends with an offer of mercy from the LORD God.

"*Jesus came to save His people from their sins*!" He did **not** come to help them save themselves. Selah! (Matthew 1:21)

**From this first answer we learn another important lesson** that the Lord was not unjust in hardening the heart of Pharaoh.

The text says, "*I raised thee up*" to this position of power and influence (Exodus 19:16). It does **not** say, "*I created thee to condemn thee*."

There are about 15 or more verses referring to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. About half of them inform us God hardened Pharaoh's heart; the other half instructs us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Paul asserts that as God was not unjust in hardening the heart of Pharaoh, nor was He jaundiced in hardening some of the Israelites against the gospel of Christ. God hardened his heart, but Pharaoh consented to that thickening; that is, God hardened Pharaoh and it was his preferred posture as a man of power.

All Israelites are sinners. All deserve judgment. God is not unjust for enlightening some for salvation nor is He unjust for blinding others to that same knowledge — to blind people who preferred to be blind and consented to be blind to the gospel and to live without the knowledge of God in darkness.

**Pharaoh's hardening**: The whole idea that God would harden any man's heart repulses the twisted logic of natural man. The text, however, informs us that God was the Prime Mover in the hardening—a thickening that resulted in the mighty display of power and deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

The idea here is that God agitated Pharaoh and stirred him to reject Moses' petition to free the slaves so that God's glory might be put on full display to the whole world.

Much has been written on this subject. But, let it be noted that Pharaoh consented to God's hardening his heart; that is, it was the choice he was most naturally inclined to make.

Take note: God did not harden a good man's heart in search of truth, but He hardened Pharaoh's -- an evil man's heart in love with wealth and power.

God does **not** harden the hearts of good men . . . of weak men struggling with sin who want to know Him!

If God hardens the heart of sinful men, it is likely they want it that way; and, if God softens some hearts to hear and receive the gospel message, is God unjust? Paul's answer is "No, may it never be." He loves men not because men are lovable, but because He is a God of love. Selah!

The LORD has never hardened the heart of a weak man . . . of a pure, reasonable, honest, decent person that wants to be right with Him. It is not in His character to do so . . . "*a bruised reed He will not break*" (Isaiah 42:3).

He gives grace to those who seek it . . . wisdom to those who ask for it . . . salvation to the one pursuing it by faith. But, the sad fact of history is that there are none "*that seeketh after God*" for "*there is none that doeth good. No not one*." If a man seeks Him, it is because God placed that desire into his heart. Blessed be the Name of the Lord (Romans 3:10-13: Job 1:20-22).

**Second Question: Is man responsible?**

**Romans 9:19-24 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory- 24 even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? 25 As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call my people."**

**Looking at the structure of the apostle's argument:**

**First,** Paul asks**, "**Why does God find fault**" or "**Is man responsible?**"**

He then deliberates two points: (1) the issue of credentials to ask such a question (9:20a), and (2) the issue of creation which contain the rights of the Creator over His creation (9:20b-21).

Next, the apostle discusses two possible pre-destinations (9:22-14): (1) vessels prepared for destruction (9:22), and (2) vessels prepared for glory (9:23-24).

In asking this question, "*Why does He find fault*?" Paul discerns a spirit of pride. "*Who O man, do you think you are*?" A "*why*" question demands accountability, and God is accountable to no man! It's really the wrong question. Like a good lawyer, Paul answers a question with a question, "*Who are you. O man, to answer back to God?"*

Man calling the Judge to account for His decisions? What arrogance! Just who do you think you are to question the all-knowing, all good, all wise, all powerful Creator to hold Himself accountable to the likes of little ol' you -- a man of dust? What are your credentials to ask such questions? Even a man with a sack full of PHDs doesn't have the acumen to judge the Father. He is accountable to no man especially Dr. Know-it-Alls at the University of Big Heads.

**Second**, the apostle directs us to the creative rights of God. The author and creator of a thing has all rights over his invention, does he not?

Will the molded say to the molder, "*Why have you made me thus*?"

The question is a proud question because it presumes the created object is equal to the creator.

As Creator of all things, He has rights over that which He makes.

The Potter-Clay illustration is really a *reduction ad absurdum* argument because Paul traces the implication of the question to its logical conclusion. In creating the clay pot, the Potter retains all rights over the vessel; and, the vessel has no qualifications or authority to question the Potter's purpose. Likewise, the fact of election is wrapped in God's creative purpose for His creatures and the creature has no authority to question the Creator!

Next, the apostle asks a "What if . . . question" designed to probe the audiences' understanding of reality.

We are finite beings with limited knowledge of God. Paul, therefore, seeks to enlarge metaphysical possibilities and to expand the thinking of his readers.

Could it be, asks the apostle, that God created some vessels for wrath and others for glory? Wrath is a virtue of Almighty God. Could the Potter create a vessel to expose and testify to the virtue of His wrath and patience?

(1) Doesn't the presence of evil men in our time demonstrate the patience of God? In the end, they will be used as cannon fodder to authenticate His wrath.

(2) On the other hand, there are vessels prepared for glory, "even us" says the apostle (24) — evidence of what God's mercy and compassion can produce.

Look at the Christian community made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. God has taken vile, shameless, despicable sinners hell-bent on exploiting every vice, convicted them of their sin, and saved them by the work of His Son.

Look at the marvelous transformation of sinners—a testament to the grace and goodness of God. Is God unjust for preparing luscious culinary dishes to be enjoyed by men of faith in the banquet we call the kingdom of God? "May it never be," declared Paul (14).

**Finally**, notice the two verbs for "*prepared*" in verses 22-23. They are two different Greek words.

> *22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath* ***prepared*** *for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has* ***prepared*** *beforehand for glory*

**The first verb** is in the passive voice and the latter in the active voice. *The vessels of wrath* are being prepared (passive voice) for destruction; God, on the other hand, prepared (active voice) certain vessels for glory. The active voice

informs us that the subject of the verb is doing the action. The passive voice informs us that the subject is the object of action and that the subject voluntarily receives the motion of the verb.

Thus, the use of the active voice in reference to the vessels of mercy inform us that God is the active Savior, the One doing the saving; and the passive voice informs us that the subject is being acted upon, the vessels of wrath, and that they appear to be willfully receiving their appointment.

There is a story of an atheist who dared God to strike him dead in five minutes. The audience nervously waited. At the end of five minutes, he said, "You see, there is no God." After the talk, two coeds were talking wherein one asked the other what he thought about the speaker's proof there is no God. The other said, "No, he didn't prove there was no God. He just proved even an arrogant bast**d like him can't exhaust the patience of God in five minutes."

In conclusion, the apostle exalts the sovereignty of God in salvation. He is not unjust for saving some and not saving others. Salvation is of God, not man.

If you are a Christian, your heart should be exploding with profound thankfulness; if you are not a believer, your heart should be filled with fear. You are, after all, responsible for your own soul.

# 71. Romans 16:20

## Satan on a Leash

**"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."**

Why does Paul refer to a God of peace, and not a God of war?

Ever seen Guido Reni's glorious painting, "*The Archangel Michael Defeating Satan*" 1635? Notice the facial expression of the angel. A masterpiece!

God is sovereign over Satan . . . over evil . . . over ghouls; and, He is active in the world now quelling his power. Evil men and their plans are being frustrated and defeated in nowtime.

Paul's astounding confidence is grounded on Genesis 3:15 where the apostle sees Satan as a crushed snake.

"*Crushed*" is a future indicative verb. "*Satan*" is the direct object." "*under your feet is the indirect object*" -- a reference to the ones receiving the benefit of the verb action on the direct object.

Satan is identified as the source of the conflicts in the Roman church -- our earthly foe. He is a real adversary and not one to be trifled with, but he is a legally defeated foe by the power of the cross.

It is the "*soon*" that grates against our impatient souls. "*Soon*" does not mean 2,000 years nor does it mean an hour from now. More conquests are expected. His defeat comes in stages: at the cross, in various seasons of life, in nowtime by acts of faith,and at the end of history. The Crusher is the God of peace -- who in relation to Satan is both an irresistible Force and an immovable Object.

> "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; our helper he, amid the flood." - Luther
>
> *"Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).*
>
> "There are three other Scriptural sayings which may have been floating in the Apostle's mind when he penned this triumphant assurance. 'Thou shalt bruise his head'; the great first Evangel-we are to be endowed with Christ's power; 'The lion and the adder thou shalt trample under foot'-all the strength that was given to ancient saints is ours; 'Behold! I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy'-the

charter of the seventy is the perennial gift to the Church." - MacClaren

Here "the God of patience and consolation" (15:3) and "the God of hope" (15:13) is called the "God of peace" (16:20).

> *Romans 15:5 Now t**he God of patience and consolation** grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*
>
> *Romans 15:13 Now **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*
>
> *Hebrew 13:20-21 Now t**he God of peace**, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrew 13:20)*
>
> *"Two antagonists are at hand-grips in every one of us. On the one hand, the 'God of peace,' on the other, 'Satan.' If you believe in the personality of the One, do not part with the belief in the personality of the other. If you believe that a divine power and Spirit is ready to help and strengthen you, do not think so lightly of the enemies that are arrayed against you as to falter in the belief that there is a great personal Power, rooted in evil, who is warring against each of us. Ah, brethren! we live far too much on the surface, and we neither go down deep enough to the dark source of the Evil, nor rise high enough to the radiant Fountain of the Good. It is a shallow life that strikes that antagonism of God and Satan out of itself. And though the belief in a personal tempter has got to be very unfashionable nowadays, I am going to venture to say that you may measure accurately the vitality and depth of a man's religion by the emphasis with which he grasps the thought of that great antagonism. There is a star of light, and there is a star of darkness; and they revolve, as it were, round one centre." (MacClaren)*

"Under your feet":

> "Notice, 'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.' Yes, it is God that bruises, but He uses our feet to do it. It is God from whom the power comes, but the power works through us, and we are neither merely the field, nor merely the prize, of the conflict between these two, but we ourselves have to put all our pith into the task of keeping down the flat, speckled head that has the poison gland in it. 'The God of peace'-blessed be His Name-'shall bruise Satan under your feet,' but it will need the tension of your

muscles, and the downward force of your heel, if the wriggling reptile is to be kept under" (MacClaren).

The sovereign God of Peace crushes the work of Satan, and it is the man of peace that triumphs over His deputies at work through governmental institutions.

*" . . . in quietness and trust is your strength . . ." – Isaiah 30:15*

# 72. 1 Corinthians 3:19

## God Destroys the Wisdom of the Wise

**"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."**

The Greeks argued the gospel was foolishness (a dead man that saves), but Paul asserts that the wisdom of these critics is actually foolishness – that the "*foolishness*" of the gospel out lasts, out shines, and out performs the wisdom of man.

To support his premise that God's wisdom destroys man's deductions, Paul quotes a Scripture from the Book of Job.

"*It is written*" means Paul grounds his premise on Scripture (Job 5:13).

The word "*taketh*" means "*to snatch*," "*to clench*," and "*grasp with the fist*." The verb informs us that no matter how crafty or cunning men (politicians) may be God can and does thwart their plans, crush their schemes, and frustrates their counsels. Furthermore, he may allow them to attack one another in order to derail their course of action. For this reason conflicts dominate politics. Those who depend on their own cunning instead of honesty will fall prey to their own duplicity and dreamy ideology.

Thus, Paul quotes this text in support of his thesis that God's foolishness (the gospel) is wiser than the wisdom of men that opposes it.

# 73. 1 Corinthians 7:7

**For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.**

The context of this verse is about marriage. Paul had the gift of celibacy and wished all men had it . . . but, he didn't demand that Christian men or their pastors remain unmarried. Celibacy was a gift, and not all men possess it.

The word "gift" (charisma) is our word "grace."

In so saying, Paul recognized God is the Giver of gifts, and that He in His sovereignty gives to every man grace — an ability . . . a talent . . . or skill to glorify Him — natural and spiritual.

Some men have skills in music, others in art, and some in dexterity. These gifts may include physical agility, mental acuity, or even fragility (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Whether the gift is mental or physical, spiritual or material, men are called to recognize Him as the Source of their talents, desires, drives, hindrances, opportunities, and capacities.

Truth be known, most people are dissatisfied with their appearance and station in life. The cosmetic industry lacks no customers.

Why spend our life complaining, coveting, and envying others? Both our advantages and our shortcomings are from Him . . . and we should be thankful for each.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would you do with it? He appoints our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and limitations, perks and defects for our good . . . that we might seek good and not evil; that we might be a blessing to others and not live hedonistically.

Gifts are from Lord. Commands and graces contain God-given rights and no government on earth can make you apply for a license to exercise a right. For example, you have a right to travel, work, and to marry; — and the State can **not** make you apply for a license to marry.

Beware of discounting the graces of Theos in your life.

Though we can breathe in possibilities and breathe out doubts; let us learn contentment and be at peace with things we cannot change.

> "Gratitude is a sunrise—quiet, steady, and capable of warming everything it touches."

Blessed be His name!

# 74. Ephesians 1:4-5

**According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

Government has no jurisdiction over religion – none, zero, zilch. They should be impacted by true religion, but they cannot govern it. "Spiritual" matters are governed by God, not government or psychologists. True religion relates to God's choices in eternity and secondarily to man's choices in time.

"Accordingly" refers back to the spiritual blessings of salvation in Christ: "He chose us for Himself," or "in him before (pro) the foundation of the world;" meaning before creation . . . before Genesis 1:1 . . . before we came into existence. See John 17:24, 1 Peter 1:20, John 6:70, John 13:18. John 15:16-19)

"Spiritual blessings" triumph earthly blessings of wealth, fame, and comfort.

"He" is the active subject. "chosen" is an aorist indicative verb. The object of this election is "us."

"holy" and "blameless" refers to the pre-eminent, spiritual blessings of salvation — a positional truth declaring Heaven's view of His children. Though believers struggle on earth to be free of sin, to be holy, and to be blameless, they ought to rest in these declarations and the accomplishments of Christ at Calvary for them.

> "All who are chosen to happiness as the end, are chosen to holiness as the means" (Matthew Henry).

Salvation is accredited to His election (choice) for believers to be saved in Christ — to be adopted as His children. The reason for this privilege is "the good pleasure of His will" and **not** the good pleasure of our will.

"in love" informs us of the Father's motivation to save men. The "us" refers to the church; inferring that believers are drawn to Christ because God's love works on men in time causing them to believe in His Son. Blessed be Ha Shem!

Believers are not saved by chance, caprice, or human choice. Salvation is attributed to God's grace in eternity past.

In this thing called "time," it appears that men are saved by "choice," and young theologians using human reasoning join the Arminian camp.

It was the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609) that emphasized human free will, universal grace, and conditional election – a view opposed to this text.

It appears that men come to the door of salvation and chose Christ (Whosoever will . . . ), but as one reads Scripture He learns that the Father chose men to believe in the Son before the foundation of the world ("Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"); meaning that salvation is not a recent plan or a decision He made in time, but something settled in the mind of God from eternity.

No Christian is saved because he makes a choice and decides he wants to go to heaven. The sinner's will is **not** free. The sinner's will is bound to earth and the things that he can see and feel. His will is bound by sin just like the rest of the man. Men become children of God because God "predestinated" them (us) by His mercy to be clothed with the garments of salvation before we came into being.

This is not to say that men don't have to choose Christ as Savior. This text informs us that it is God who elects men and frees them to believe. He is the First Cause of salvation; that is, He is **not** the responder to man's alleged free will to go to heaven. He is the Elector and Initiator of salvation.

> "This method of grace gives no encouragement to evil, but shows sin in all its hatefulness, and how it deserves vengeance. The believer's actions, as well as his words, declare the praises of Divine mercy" (Matthew Henry).

All praise for salvation belongs to the Father, not to "us." Blessed be His name!

# 75. Ephesians 1:11

## Sovereignty and Predestination

**"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."**

This text shows us the golden colors of God's sovereignty shining upon the church to illuminate the wonders of salvation so that Christians may rejoice and enjoy their salvation.

The verb "obtained" (eklarothamen) is an aorist passive meaning "we were chosen" for this inheritance. The word "predestinated" means "for ordained" (pro'orizo —like casting lots) —an aorist passive inferring the subject is being acted on and not doing the action of the verb. Here, human choice is over the horizon.

Calvinists believe in the effectual calling which is "the action of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction of sin and bestowing the gift of faith in Christ."

While the gospel goes out to many, it is only effectual for a few.

"*In him*" is a dative expressing personal interest (like English's direct object). In this case, the purpose of election is for the advantage and benefit of Christ. All Christians belong to God for the joy of the Son.

The "*we*" refers to the Ephesians or to all true believers.

The word "*predestinated*" is formed from a root word and a prefix (*pro* and *oridzo*). The root word "*oridzo*" means "*to decide*" or "*to make a decision*." The prefix "*pro*" means "*before*" or "*beforehand*." Sometime in eternity past, the Lord chose specific men and women to obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Believers did not choose Him, He chose them.

Moreover, the text does <u>not</u> say he predestinates some to condemnation.

Every Christian can say, "I possess Christ," but as he grows in the knowledge of Scripture he learns that "God first possessed Him." We love the Savior, but as we grow, we learn that He first loved us! We boast of having Christ in our hearts, but as we mature we learn that we were in His heart before creation and that He chose "*us in him before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4). Oh, the wonder of it all! Who can understand it?

The verb, "*have obtained an inheritance*" and the participle "*having been predestinated*" are both aorist tenses expressing a fact. The passive expresses the operation of predestination as an act of Theos upon the subject ("*we*").

The word "*inheritance*" (*kleroo*) is part of the verb. Its root means "*to cast lots*." In the grand purpose of history, the Father "*cast lots*" sort of speak and chose specific people to experience his love and salvation. This destiny is not haphazard or by "flipping a coin," but something rooted in the will of God.

The phrase "*who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*" informs us that God works in our lives to conform us to the counsel of his own will; that is, in his grace He supplies the power for us to respond in faith.

The word "*worketh*" (*en'ergountas*) could be translated "*in working*" which implies that not only does God command us to believe, He gives us the ability to believe. No man can frustrate His will. His calling becomes the "*effectual calling*" because He Who calls us to salvation works in us to give us the capacity to respond to the gospel. What He wills, He performs. "God proposes, God disposes!" He removes all obstacles so we can enter His kingdom freely. Moreover, He does not see into the portal of history as to who will believe and then elects them. He chooses them and then in time, He works in men's hearts so they can respond correctly to Him.

Life involves choices, but we must consider His movements in the victories and defeats of our lives. Parents, friends, troubles, successes, failures, and sickness are merely tools He uses to achieve *the purpose of His will.*

Further, we learn the acts of government add nothing to the furtherance of His will. The out workings of His will is wrapped up in the sovereign election of Theos. God's election of man to experience the spiritual blessings of His kingdom is inexplicably more important than a man being elected to some petty public office; that is, His election is the only election that matters for eternity.

# 76. Colossians 1:16-17

## Creator and Sustainer

**"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."**

Paul brazenly uses terms only associated with the LORD God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and assigns them to Christ.

Either the Christian Apostle is exaggerating, careless, or Christ is greater than any of us can comprehend — that God walked among us in the person of Christ displaying His powers. Drawing men to Himself must be considered the greatest event in history.

He is greater than the invention of fire; greater than the invention of the wheel; greater than the Roman conquest of the world; greater than the invention of the printing press; and, greater than the invention of the clock, greater than the inventions of cars, trains, and airplanes: "*For by him all things were created*."

The inspired Apostle attributes the creation of heaven and earth to the power of the Lord Jesus. When you read "*In the beginning God*," think of Christ; and, when you think of Christ, know that He is the Creator-God. All things were created by Him, through Him, and for Him.

In case there is any doubt about his phenomenal claim, he addresses things specifically: heaven, earth, things seen, and things not seen. If you see it, He created it; if you don't see it, he created that also. Look up, He created it; look down, He created it. He not only created the Sun, Moon, and Stars --things visible, He created orders of angels and the unseen world of Seraphic "*thrones*" and "*dominions*."

Some Greek philosophers claimed that angels created the world, but Paul sets the record straight. Christ created the cosmos and whatever part angels had in assembling this planet, Christ created them . . . orders them . . . and holds them accountable to His scepter.

Not only is the Lord Christ the Creator of all things, He *sustains* all that He created. He completed creating the heavens and the earth in six days, and He presently preserves what we see, visible and invisible.

He is the cosmic glue that holds protons and electrons together in every atom. Though the atom is 99.999% space, these subatomic energy fields contain a universe of electrical energy controlled by the power of the Son. Christ is

sovereign over creation . . . and, sovereign over the new creation. Not only does He hold the material and spiritual world together, He holds us together.

At times it feels like madmen in the fickle world of politics are tearing humanity apart, but He holds the nations in the hollow of His hand and moves history toward its climax -- the kingdom of God on earth.

# 77. 1 Timothy 6:12-15

## The King of kings and Lord of lords

**"Fight the good fight of faith . . . keep this commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;"**

How can a simple minister of the gospel fight the good fight at the gates of hell when he is alone fighting devils in the heat of conflict?

The answer is by remembering our Commander and Chief.

Our Lord wears **three crowns**: only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

History moves toward its climatic epiphany when the glory of His majestic reign shall be revealed to the cosmos.

There is only one Ruler, one King, and one Lord. Christ reigns supreme over three institutions. He is the Head of man / the family; the Head of the Church; and the Head of all civil government. Rulers are putty in His hands. Who can prevent the establishment of His purpose?

The question, of course, is not whether Jesus is Lord, but whether proud hearts and shriveled souls will recognize Him as such. *The gospel that turned the world upside down* taught *another king, King Jesus* (Acts 17:6-7).

The sovereignty of God ought to be a great comfort to us. We are way too quick to praise God for our successes and blame ourselves for our failures . . . or blame others for their debacles; way too prone to attribute wealth to the blessing of God, and poverty to the activities of men; way too inclined to attribute the gains of man to his choices and the losses of a man to his weaknesses; way too human in assigning riches to the favor of God and deficits to Satan: " . . . *in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one as well as the other"*(Ecclesiastes 7:14).

Christ is sovereign!

Better government in Washinton DC is **not** the solution to our problems!

When tragedy strikes and fears shatter our peace, we can take comfort in knowing that no detail has escaped our ever-present, all-knowing, all-seeing, sovereign God. The One in control promises that *"for those who love God all things work together for good,"* (Romans 8:28).

# 78. Hebrews 4:3

## The Finished Project

**"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."**

Men are not trained to rest. They are trained to work, to argue, and to fight. The State wants hyperactive workers for tax revenues, not calm men patiently doing their job.

But, a Christian's strength is not in his warrior mindset, but in resting in the work of Christ at the cross.

The grounds of rest is two-fold: "*believed*" and "*we enter into* His *rest*."

Men see history as out of control going around in circles, but the Lord's work of redemption in Christ and His calling of believers unto salvation were finished before the foundation of the world because these things are bound up in the eternal purpose of God.

Paul warns men not to imitate the skittery guilt of those excluded from His rest, but to enter into this ease by faith. The rest does not come to those who die, but to those who believe. Let us believe . . . be still . . . and experience its power.

He did not plan our salvation after the fall or in time when we put our trust in Christ, nor after our grandmother prayed for us, but before He laid the foundation of the world.

All the events and pressures that led you to accept Christ as your Savior were merely the outworking of His plan before Genesis 1:1.

Moreover, we can't change the world nor reverse the fate of nations. But, we can rest in the finished work of Christ . . . be at peace . . . and experience its power. Therefore, let us be like a lake at dawn—still, unhurried, holding the whole sky without effort.

# 79. Hebrews 13:20

## The Peace of God that Leads to Perfection

**Hebrews 13: 20-21 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

Understanding the Providence of God in salvation and in His Fatherly training leads to peace in the heart.

This is a prayer for the complete restoration of the sheep; that is, as silver is refined in the furnace, let us be refined under acts of Providence so we might perfectly reflect His image under heat of trials.

The title "**God of peace**" is the subject of the sentence and "make you perfect" (katartisai) is the optative verb; that is, it is a wish, not a command; a hope, and not a fact. *Katartisai* means "to mend what is broken; to make whole or complete; to sew a rip in a garment."

Paul's prayer is grounded on the work of the "*God of peace*" – not the God of righteousness or holiness or mercy or grace, but the "*God of peace*."

This "*God of peace,*" having been propitiated by the death of His Son on the cross; and, our debt having been fully discharged by the blood of Christ; and, God having forgiven us of our sins by the mediation of the Savior, reached into hell and raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

Use of the title "God of peace" implies there was some kind of strife or conflict to which His work was needed. Possibly, (a) the strife and division among the Hebrews needed repair, or (b) the conflict regarding God and sinners having ended through Christ, God being at rest restored the life of His Son; (c) and, peace was needed to endure the chastisments of the Father graciously given to us to perfect us (Hebrews 12).

Jesus is called "*the great shepherd of the sheep*." He was great in character; great in battle; great in love; great in holiness; great in courage; and great is His accomplishments, and great in Shepherding of God's flock.

We believers are called "*sheep*" probably because we do not understand what the Shepherd did for us at Calvary and does for us in His present exalted life. As the good shepherd our Lord died for the sheep and protects them from Divine wrath (Psalm 22); as the great shepherd He lives and provides for His

sheep (Psalm 23); as the Chief Shepherd he reigns . . . and rewards the sheep with eternal blessings (Psalm 24).

"*The blood of the everlasting covenant*" implies that God works to mend us completely based on His covenant promise and consideration of the price paid for our salvation; that is, since blood is the currency of the spirit world, and we were purchased with His blood, "*making us perfect*" is His sight is a continuation of His promise by the work of Providence.

Notes:

There is an illusion here to Isaiah 63:11 "*Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?"* Here the shepherds are no doubt Moses and Aaron (Psalm 77:20), God having delivered the people from death also brought Moses and Aaron out of the Red Sea to lead His flock to Sinai.

His salvation at the Red Sea was based on the covenant of blood – a completion of His promise to deliver His people from bondage. The blood that saved the people from the death angel secured all other blessings including their redemption from Egypt by way of the Red Sea.

The great work of mending and bringing the people to perfection must have a strong foundation: God of peace, blood, covenant, raised from the dead, a living Shepherd, great in power, love, and peace.

The great work of conforming us to His will is total reconciliation of the total man to the total image of Christ; that is, that there might not be any part of the man that is not committed to the will of God. To wake up thinking one has a choice whether to do good or evil demonstrates the lack of reconciliation of the man to the Providence of God. The perfect man has no choice but to do "*every good work" and what is "well pleasing in his sight."*

When praying we do not look at ourselves, but to the resources of Another – the God of peace. We start with the fact of God's accomplishments through the Son, and reach for the impossible – perfection. Let us remember, the Good Shepherd died for us to save us from the penalty of sin; as the Great Shepherd He lives to save us from the power of sin; and, as the Chief Shepherd, He will come and save us from the presence of sin.

The "*God of peace*" is used six times in Paul's epistles (Romans 15:13; 16:20; Philippians 4:7; 4:9; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The title "*God of Peace*" acts like a benediction over our restless lives, unsettled hearts, and heated conflicts to bring us peace that we might walk where angels walk (MacLaren).

Tapping into the "*God of Peace*" would calm their fears, temper their anger, repair relationships, and restore their ability to pursue holiness.

This "*God of Peace*" dwells above the conflicts, gloominess, and irritations common to men; and in His presence the restless heart can find shalom. His peace can shed light on our shadows, calm the waves on our turbulent seas, minister sweetness where there is bitterness, and bring a dove's wing where there are clenched fists and tight jaws. "My peace" I give unto you.

The only way to obtain peace is to do good – "*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . . "* There can be no peace on earth where there is not conformity to Heaven's will. Want peace? Then lighten the load on your ship and throw your mutinous captain-self overboard, your iron anchor attached to the underside of this world, your heavy burdens of collecting silver and gold, and your steel desires to have your way on this voyage.

> *Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*

Moreover, the peace of God orders our holiness (See: 1 Thessalonians 5:23). What a man needs for peace is to surrender his vessel to be captained by the Lord Jesus Christ, to allow His peace to be the steersman, and to debar frivolous anger, lusts, and bitterness from standing at the helm.

Exercising the peace of God impacts our relationships for good (Colossians 3:15).

The peace of God acts like an umpire guarding and protecting our hearts (Philippians 4:7).

This peace can only come by prayer. The heart is like a stormy sea tossing our ship on top of white caps and then burying our vessels under tons of wet darkness, fear, and marine debris. Only Christ can say, "*Peace, be still*!:

> *Come Thou fount of every blessing*
>
> *Tune my heart to sing Thy grace*
>
> *Streams of mercy never ceasing*
>
> *Call for songs of loudest praise*

This passage is the only reference to the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. We do not serve a dead martyr, but a living Savior – the high priest of our profession within the veil – the living Shepherd – the Great Shepherd of God's flock risen from the dead ready to perfect us.

We don't have to live in the shadows away from the sunshine or sail our vessel on stormy seas on cold, windy nights. Believing in His peace and praying to the Great Shepherd increases the possibilities of happy, holy service. Because the power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us, there is no mountain we cannot climb; no river we cannot cross; and, no burden we cannot carry.

So, like a little bird, open your mouth and let him fill it. He lives to provide for you; to protect you, and to perfect you. Don't worry about storms on the sea, or getting lost in the forest, or wolves in the pasture, or thornbushes near the path. The Great Shepherd of the sheep leads. Will you follow?

# 80. James 4:12

## One Lawgiver

**4:11-15 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? 13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.**

God is sovereign as the one and only Lawgiver.

While the Scriptures commands us to ONLY take oaths in the name of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:13).

Deuteronomy 6:13 Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Americans are indoctrinated in to being Bellamy **statists** by repeating the Pledge of Allegiance again and again and again.

> "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

What? A pledge to the State and not to the LORD God? In the Pledge what "God" is being referred to? The Hindu god? Self? The State? Omnistic deities?

> *Exodus 20:2-3 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

But, it is worse than this. Well-meaning Adults force this oath on children who have not yet reached the age of maturity. **Statism** and devotion to the State starts early.

Moreover, Americans are taught by the Founding Fathers that law resides in "*We the People*" in the form of a democracy – a far cry from the Scriptures that place the Source of law in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What an heretical thought to think that the source of law is in "We the People" and not the Lord God.

In all fairness, however, “We the People” is not a theological statement, but a geo-political one designed to make a separation between America and the tyranny of King George. Inadvertently and unwittingly, the Fathers placed Americans under the tyranny of democracy (rule by the dumb-majority) and multi-culturalism (many law-orders).

“*Speak not evil one of another*” -- There is one, perfect Lawgiver and that is the LORD God. Christians are **not** Divine legislators. Congress is **not** a lawgiver. We have **not** been appointed by God to whine and bellyache against our brother.

James is saying, “You critics, who do you think you are? Quit playing the role of God. Quit putting yourself above the law as if you have been appointed a superior judge of your brethren's actions. Stop all this grousing and grumbling over what your neighbor says and does.”

"*There is one lawgiver*” and not two lawgivers. There is one God and one absolute law by whose judgment and final sentence thou must stand or fall.

> “hereafter; for he is able to execute the sentence he denounces, and save with a perfect and everlasting salvation, and to destroy with an utter and endless destruction" (Benson).

“*Speak not evil one of another*”-- James is not condemning necessary judgment regarding a man's violations of God's law, but unwanted and uninvited carping about trivia.

Further, this passage applies directly to wives who are designated helpmeets for their husbands; and, it applies indirectly to husbands who are charge with leading their wives lovingly and honorably; that is, while it is a man's duty to instruct his soulmate about God’s law there is no duty given to women to correct or instruct their husbands about the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 9:5).

There is **no** greater heresy than the notion that a man or a woman is at liberty to choose what law they will serve. god’s are the source of law, and in the Christian religion, the LORD God is the Source of law. Therefore, the Christian believes there is one, absolute God; and, one absolute law-order.

“*one Lawgiver*” implies that Christians must recognize *Rex Lex*, that all true law comes from King Jesus; and, *Lex rex*, the Law of Christ is king; that Christians follow the rule of law and not “rule by law,” rule by man, and not the rule of Congress; His law, and not man’s statutes.

Relatively speaking, Christians are free men. But, James calls holy men to recognize His sovereignty and to umbrella every plan under the banner, “*If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”*

# 81. Revelation 1:5-6

## Who Rules the Rulers?

**"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."**

How big is your Christ? Most of us have a huge view of the State and a pitiful, shriveled up view of Him.

Here the Spirit seeks to enlarge our tiny minds so we can take in the greatness of the glorified Christ.

When King David brought the ark to Jerusalem with a parade of priests and Levites, he faced a crisis. The gates were too small for His Majesty, therefore, he penned the famous words, "*Lift up your heads, O Ye Gates*." (Psalm 24).

Likewise, we need to lift up our gates . . . our eyes . . . to enlarge the portals, doors, and hatches of our minds so we receive a portion of the greatness of His Majesty.

John informs us his letter is from "*Jesus Christ*."

Three more appellations enforce the authority of the letter:

(1) As *a "faithful witness*," he not only speaks the truth, but will cast the first stone in judgment (Deuteronomy 17:7);

(2) "*As begotten of the dead*," refers to Christ's triumph over the grave by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection. As victor over death, he is able to solve man's fundamental problem of death. He is the first in a whole harvest to come.

"*first begotten from the dead*" means that He represents a new humanity of resurrected souls in a harvest to come; and,

(3) "*prince of the kings of the earth*" (archon) describe his authority over civil magistrates, parliaments, and heads of state.

As wonderful as these truths are to the soul, we want to concentrate on what the title "*prince of the kings of earth*" implies.

America's problems are **not** economic; they are spiritual; that is, they are rooted in a deficient understanding of Christ as King, and the apotheosis of the State as some kind of god that has no accountability to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When problems arise politicians do not seek to align themselves under the authority of King Jesus, rather they seek solutions through military programs, more taxation, and more regulations. The American politician thinks that if there a problem, throw $$ at it . . . bomb it . . . sanction it . . . kill it.

**As Prince**

John states that Jesus Christ is "*the prince of the kings of the earth*." The use of the definite article points out the identity of Christ in regard to the kings of the earth: He is their "prince." He is not a prince among other princes, but **the One and Only Prince of the nations.**

The Greek word translated **"***prince***"** (*archon*) refers to one who is a ruler, lord, commander, or a chief governor. He is the *Archon* by virtue of his resurrection from the dead. The word *archon* indicates one who has authority to govern others. The root *arch* comes from a family of Greek words, of which *archon* is a part. It refers to that which has primacy, priority, and authority whether in time or rank. The word "*prince*" or "*ruler*" is, therefore, an excellent translation.

The English word **"***prince"* comes from the Latin term *princeps* which means *first* or *chief*, and the primary sense of "*prince*" is that of a *monarch* or *king* or *governor*. Jesus Christ is the *princeps* of the kings and rulers of the earth.

**As King**

John uses the term "prince" (archon) which can be translated "chief," "ruler," "king," or "Supreme Ruler." The term "prince" in Latin is princepts which can be translated chief, leader, head, main, sovereign, greatest authority, inspirer, director, head, emperor, king, foremost, main.

He is <u>not</u> one among many . . . *for there is only one* ***Lawgiver*** (James 4:12) and one ***Mediator*** between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus is ***<u>the</u> Ruler*** of the kings of the earth, the Potentate, the Chief Justice of Heaven's Supreme Court, the Chief Legislator, the Commander and Chief of Heaven's armies: "*For the LORD (Jesus) is our* ***judge****; the LORD (Jesus) is our* ***lawgiver****; the LORD (Jesus) is our* ***king****; he will save us*" (Isaiah 33:22).

**The critical message of Revelation is the Sovereignty of Jesus!** His reign is not something in the future, but *a present reality to believe and claim now.* Neither Satan, nor men, nor chance govern the affairs of men.

Jesus is the Referee over all the events of history. *If we miss this truth, we miss the main message of the book.* And, it is our duty to proclaim the sovereignty of Christ and challenge civil rulers to acknowledge His authority and surrender to His law-order.

(Note: There is satanic resistance to this truth. In America, the doctrines of "separation of church and state," and "religion and politics don't mix" are

propaganda terms designed to silence most Christians in political debate. The way to overcome this is to confront their hypocrisy. Government officials say one thing and practice another.

*Every man is religious, and every law represents someone's religious values.* The secularists use the doctrine of separation of church and *state* to bar Christians from asserting the authority of Christ so they can force their religious values (like same-sex marriage and baby killing) down the throats of Americans. We must challenge their duplicity and not permit them to hide behind the doctrine of separation of church and state while they drive their secular religious values into the minds of men.

**Of Kings of the earth**

The genitival phrase, "*of the kings of the earth*," defines His jurisdiction, the kind of power and authority He has. He is the Ruler of rulers; the Princes of princes; the Governor of governors! And, in the language of Revelation 19:16, He is the "King of kings!"

"*of the kings*" of the earth is translated "*regum*" in Latin which is a plural for *rex* (king).

The term "*king*" signifies those who stand first in governing authority within a country, those who are the highest ranking magistrate in their particular nation.

The words "*of the earth*" informs us the rulers of the world have a duty to acknowledge His authority and to align their administrations under His authority. The kings under His rule are each and every chief magistrate in the world! And, if every chief magistrate is under His authority, then all lesser magistrates are also under His authority. He claims absolute, global, universal jurisdiction over every civil ruler (Psalm 97:1). And, He is more unyielding than an anvil.

He is **not** announcing Jesus' authority over the church here, though he has authority over the church. John is **not** stating that Jesus is "his King," or "my king," or the "king" of the church, though He is. He is the King of kings.

The persons responsible to subject themselves to Prince Jesus, are kings, civil rulers, subordinates, and officers of the State, whether in the legislative, judicial, or executive branches of government. Of such, Jesus Christ is Prince — *archon*, ruler, lord, chief, the first in power, authority, and dominion.

Therefore, the statement that Jesus Christ is "the prince of the kings of the earth" is a powerful *political* title implying all earthly rulers are required to surrender to the authority of Scripture. It defines the authority of Christ in reference to political rulers and the sphere of civil government. It designates Christ as the Supreme Ruler over all magistrates in all the nations of the earth.

The Scripture gives to Jesus Christ the title of "*head*" in reference to His absolute authority over the church (Ephesians 1:19-21). But, this is **not** the declaration in this text. The church is **not** subject to the kings of the earth nor do the kings have jurisdiction over the church. The church has its ministry (subject matter jurisdiction) of gospel proclamation under Christ as Head of the Church; and, the government has its ministry of justice under Christ as Prince of the kings of the earth (subject matter jurisdiction).

Jesus is over all civil rulers, and all civil rulers. Even those in China and the Congo are expected to order their affairs under His authority. The church can admonish kings, but it **cannot** command kings. **Jesus commands kings!** Other texts in Holy Writ utilize the title of "*Lord*" to communicate that He reigns over all men and aspects of life (individuals, family, church). But, this is **not** what John intended to communicate here.

**He wants the original readers to understand that Jesus has authority over the State**; that He is the Ruler over all civil institutions and the persons who govern them; that officers of the State are under duty to surrender to His authority and to conduct their administrations of justice under His command.

The issue, of course, is not whether Jesus is the King of kings, but will the heads of state acknowledge Him as such . . . and, herein lies the problem.

Statesmen see themselves as sovereign . . . as institutions with a secular purpose rather than under a religious duty to submit to King Jesus. As the church accepts Christ as Head of the church, all civil rulers are expected to honor the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of State in their civil administrations. And, here is the rub. God's churches acknowledge the Headship of Christ, but civil magistrates do **not** and will **not** acknowledge Christ as Prince of the rulers of the kings of the earth. They are in rebellion against the LORD and His anointed as Psalm 2 so accurately describes.

The New Testament title of "*prince*" for Jesus Christ is announced in the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. They state that Christ will be a King who will rule the kings of the earth and govern the nations: Psalm 2:1-12; Psalm 22:28; Psalm 89:27; Psalm 110:1-7; Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 9:6-7; 33:22; Jeremiah 10:7; Daniel 7:13-14.

The New Testament also makes it clear that Jesus was installed as *King of the nations* at His ascension to the right hand of God: Matthew 2:2; Matthew 21:5; Matthew 27:11; John 17:2; John 19:18-20; John 19:15; Acts 2:30-36; Acts 4:12; Acts 17: 1-7; 1 Timothy 6:15.

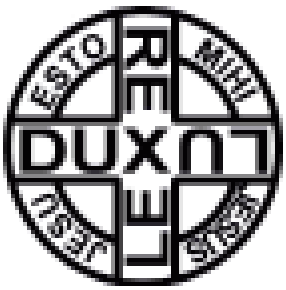
John's words do **not** suggest that at some future time Jesus will become the "*prince of the kings of the earth*," **but that He is to be recognized as such** NOW**!**

From the beginning the church has preached **"***that there is another king (Rex), one Jesus"* (Acts 17:7); that is, *there is a King who is greater than Caesar***.** This is the gospel that *turned the world upside down*. If the church wants to do so again, it must preach Christ as King now and call civil rulers to repent and submit to Him (Acts 17:6-7).

**The goal of history is the defeat of His enemies** (Satan, sin, and death) (1 Corinthians 15:24-26); that is, that all men would acknowledge Christ as Lord of the family, Lord of the church, and King of the nations. It is the duty of all nations to confess Christ as their Ruler and King.

But, the issue is not whether He is King of kings, but will men accept and confess Him as such.

The gospel that turned the world upside down and conquered Western Civilization did not proclaim government as god, or Caesar as king, or the Roman City State as the hope of the world.




There is no law without a king, and King Jesus has His law. The West seeks to practice the rule of law v. the king is law; however, there is no law without a *rex* (See Exodus 20:1-3).

Because there's only one King and one the law, we must work under the law that comes from King Jesus. In this sense, Christians believe in THE KING IS LAW *or Rex Lex!!* Once man recognizes One King, then we can work toward Lex Rex. Selah.

**DUX LUX REX LEX Cross**. The rough English translation is "*my King, my Leader (Commander), my Light, and my Law*" in reference, of course, to Jesus Christ. Word order makes little difference in Latin.

Rex, Lex, Lux, Dux is Latin meaning ''My King, My Law, My Light, and my Commander:" Jesus is Rex (King), Lex (Law), Lux (light), and Dux (Leader or Commander).

The gospel that turned the world upside down taught "*another Rex, King Jesus*."

The Apostolic Declaration that launched the gospel from Jerusalem into the Mediterranean world acted on a commission sealed by the Lord's signet ring procured by His ascension to heaven's throne:

> *"We ought to obey God rather than men" - Acts 5:29*

**He made us kings and priests**

The blessing of being a saint is mentioned. Saints are chosen, cherished, cleansed, and crowned.

- As loved ones, saints are the objects of Divine affection and favor. Christians are loved **not** because they are lovable, but because it is God's nature to love.
- As cleansed ones, saints are washed and purified from sin by virtue of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- As crowned ones, saints are citizens of His kingdom (a kingdom: *basileian*, singular) by virtue of their association with Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father. The term "*basilean*" is translated "*kings*" in some versions, but the better translation is "*a kingdom*" with the idea of rule contained therein—not ruled, but reigning triumphant over all enemies (Barnes, 1975); not slaves, but sovereigns sharing in the reign of the Sovereign (1 Corinthians 7:23).
- As chosen ones, saints are anointed as priests, to represent men to God. In Israel's temple there were four courts: The court of the Gentile, the court of women, the court of the Jew, and the court of the priests. The Israelites were not allowed to go into the court of priests. Due to the gospel, however, all Christians are appointed to perform the duties of a priest excelling in their influence upon history for good. The church does **not** have a priesthood. The church is a priesthood: As a *holy priesthood* Christians offer up praises to God; as a *royal priesthood* they proclaim His glories to men (1 Peter 2:5-11).

He "*made us kings and priests*" is a reference from Exodus 19:6. This is the first of many references whereby John applies images of Israel to the church:

> "The regal and sacerdotal dignities are the two highest that can possibly exist among men; and these two are here mentioned to show the glorious prerogatives of the children of God" (Clarke, 1831).

The church is a kingdom of royal priests. Thus, the church are a people belonging to Christ, the true Israel of God. John perceives the church as sharing regal authority over the nations—not under the authority of governments, but under authority of Him who has authority over the kings of the earth (2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:6).

John attributes glory to Christ for his accomplishments. Glory is fitting for Him who stooped so low, even to the death of the cross, to raise us so high as to be called priests of God. John's benediction includes increased "dominion" (*kratos* = strength) or political power. Only an all wise, all loving, all powerful, humble Savior is worthy of increased dominion.

Enough of this nonsense that Christians must always obey the government! Christians ought to be calling their government to always obey the sovereign Christ!

# 82. Revelation 3:7

## The Key of David

**"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth:"**

Men tend to think that going to heaven or hell is a matter of personal choice . . . and, it is – His choice.

*Jesus has the key of David*; that is, He is the Steward of the kingdom of God (Isaiah 22:22) – the Manager of its mysteries and knowledge. He alone can unloose the seals of Scripture, and reveal its deeper truth to men. He is also the Gatekeeper of the doors to "heaven." *What He opens, no man can shut; and what he shuts, no man can open*.

Entering the kingdom is **not** merely a man's choice, but God's choice. No man can choose to enter the kingdom of God unless Christ first opens its doors to the man and invites Him in. Only He has the authority and power to save men and bring them into the kingdom . . . to make them sons of God.

# 83. Revelation 19:6

## Sovereignty Today and Forever

**"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"**

The gospel of the Old Testament is "*The Lord reigns*" (psalm 97:1; 99:1). This gospel is proclaimed here; i.e. the gospel of the New Testament is "the Lord reigns."

The word "*allelujah*" means "praise to Yah."

Using the glorious title "*the Lord God Omnipotent*" spotlights the sovereignty, supremacy. and the muscularity of Theos.

As John the revelator saw the climax of history, he realized afresh the glories of salvation and its consummation were the outworking of the plan of the omnipotent God from the foundation of the world.

Why do we worry and fret about the madness of kings and the policies of psychopaths? He has the power to finish what He promised.

Yes, the madness of politics grates on the believer. We wish for something better. But, in this conflict, we must remind ourselves that history is moving toward the kingdom of God (Isaiah 2, 11) and nothing is going to deter that plan. Even now things are going according to His plan.

Nothing in the choices of men, nor errands of angels, nor deeds of the Devil, nor ploys of politicians – nothing on earth can come to pass unless Jesus has purposed it. Both the good and evil (tragedy) is from Him (c.f. the Book of Esther; Isaiah 45:7).

***"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"***

# Addendum

**“For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Alleluia!”**

# 84. Synod of Dort: Calvinism v. Arminianism

Since the Arminians wanted the Dutch Reformed Church to adopt these articles for their standard of faith, they were demanding that the Scripture must be interpreted to teach the following:

(a) That man is never so corrupted by sin that he cannot believe the gospel when it is placed before him; that

(b) man is never so controlled by God that he cannot reject the gospel;

(c) God's election of men is prompted by his knowledge that men will believe the gospel based on their own willing accord (this is ratification, not election);

(d) Christ did not die exclusively for the elect but for all men in order to create a possibility for all men to be saved;

(e) it is the duty of believers to keep themselves in the state of grace by keeping up their faith or they will be lost.

The church, therefore, called for a national senate to discuss the Remonstrance of which forty-six ministers had signed. They met in November 1618 which was called the Senate of Dort. It consisted of eighty-four members and eighteen secular commissioners.

Out of the 84 scholars, 58 were Dutch, the others were foreigners from England and Europe. They conducted 154 sessions and concluded on May 9th, 1619. The first official business was the taking of the oath:

> "I promise before God, in whom I believe, and whom I worship, as being present in this place, and as being the Searcher of all hearts, that during the course of the proceedings of this Synod, which will examine and decide not only the five points and all the differences resulting from them but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith. And during all these discussions, I will only aim at the glory of God, the peace of the Church, and especially the preservation of the purity of doctrine. So help me, my Savior, Jesus Christ! I beseech him to assist me by his Holy Spirit!" (Klooster 57) (Spindleworks.com).

The goal was to examine the Five Points the Arminians had presented and only the Scripture could be used as authority.

Simon Episcopus, a student of Arminius, wanted to speak. The Arminians chose officers, intending to present themselves as a kind of counter-synod. They would deal with Synod as a party in the controversy, after which the Government, with the advice of the foreign delegates, would give its verdict.

Their main line of defense would be to attack the Contra-Remonstrants as blasphemous fanatics, concentrating on the supralapsarian[1] ideas of Gomarus.

But, Episcopus wanted to begin with a refutation of the doctrines of Calvin in hope of prejudicing the entire assembly. But, the assembly demanded Episcopus give Scriptural support in favor of their opinions. The Arminians refused.

The Arminians refused to answer questions, refused to submit studies, refused to use Scripture, refused to submit copies of their positions, and then denied the authority of the synod. The synod then asked them to submit their objections to the Belgian Confession in writing. They refused. Even when asked if the Remonstrance of 1610, they all remained silent.

On January 14, they refused to submit to the authority of the Synod and remained silent.

The leader of the Synod arose and spoke and said the foreign delegates of this assembly are of the opinion that you are unworthy to appear before this synod. With a stately exhortation reflecting on the gentleness of the assembly and the stubbornness of the Arminians, the assembly let the Arminians go.

> The foreign delegates are now of the opinion that you are unworthy to appear before Synod. You have refused to acknowledge it as your lawful judge and regarded it as an opposing party: you have tried in everything to have your own way; you have despised the decision of Synod and of the political commissioners; you refused to answer questions; you declared the credentials to be invalid. Synod has treated you with gentleness, but you have been lying from beginning to end, as one of the foreign theologians remarked. With this eulogy we will let you go. God will keep his word and he will bless the Synod. In order that we will not be delayed any longer, you will be sent out. Depart: Go! (Faber et al. 35) (spindleworks.com).

The chairs and tables of the Arminians were put away.

The Synod now began to examine their opinions from available writings, concentrating on the Five Articles of the Remonstrance of 1610. The reading of the various judgments of the eighteen committees concerning these Five Articles took place from March 7 to 21 and from March 25 to April 16. The Canons were formulated in ninety-three separate articles. These were signed by all the delegates on April 23, 1619, and solemnly promulgated in the Great Church on May 6 before a large congregation. Three days later, after six months of deliberation, the foreign divines departed, leaving the Dutch members to convene for another twenty-six sessions to deal with further national matters (Spindleworks.com)[2].

The Synod then took the five points, studied them, and then refuted them with the Word of God. This is how they came up with the five points, TULIP . . . and this was developed long after Calvin was dead.

Summarily, Calvinism is known by an acronym: T.U.L.I.P.

- **T**otal Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)
- **U**nconditional Election
- **L**imited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)
- **I**rresistible Grace
- **P**erseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

DeWitt is adamant in his judgment of Arminius and his successors:

Arminius and his successors were oath breakers; and to avoid the consequences of this offence, they in effect withdrew themselves from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, while claiming to continue as faithful members of the Church, and placed themselves under the protection of the secular power, (p. 10). He goes on to say that a man is rarely honest enough to withdraw himself, if his views become incompatible with the confessions of the church, but instead attempts, "by means of a strange line of casuistical reasoning," to convert the church to his own understanding of the truth (DeWitt). (The Doctrines of Grace and the Canons of Dordrecht, p. 28).

It is the same today. Instead of seeking the truth, people want you to adopt their views regardless if they represent Scripture or not. In 1619, if you were an Arminian, you were a heretic. In our day, if you are a Calvinist, you are heretic. Arminianism is now the standard doctrine taught in the church and in government schools.

Spurgeon once said,

> It is often said that the doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively, that those high doctrines which we love, and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones. I do not know who will have the hardihood to make that assertion, when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitefield, who in successive ages were the great exponents of the system of grace; or what will he say of the Puritans, whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing, but now we are looked upon as the heretics, and they as the orthodox. (http://www.spurgeon.org/calvinis.htm).

A trite observation: "The Calvinists emphasize the Sovereignty of God and Arminians emphasize the Freewill of man." Hogwash! Calvinists teach the responsibility of man also. The difference is not one of emphasis, but one of content. Either God saves man or man saves himself. Either salvation is by God or salvation is by man! When an Arminian teaches on justification it ends up being salvation by works.

**The gospel is Calvinism**. We can't preach the gospel unless we preach Calvinism because Calvinism is the gospel! Unless we preach the sinfulness of man and the glorious grace of God to send his Son to die for sinners, we aren't preaching the gospel. Spurgeon declared,

I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus. Such a gospel I abhor.

> *"If ever it should come to pass,*
>
> *That sheep of Christ might fall away,*
>
> *My fickle, feeble soul, alas!*
>
> *Would fall a thousand times a day."*

**If one dear saint of God had perished, so might all;** if one of the covenant ones be lost, so may all be; and then there is no gospel promise true, but the Bible is a lie, and there is nothing in it worth my acceptance. I will be an infidel at once when I can believe that a saint of God can ever fall finally. If God hath loved me once, then He will love me forever.

**Arminianism is another gospel of Christ**, but it is a **heresy** because it is subtle, plausible, and popular.

[1] There was a difference of opinion between the infra-lapsarian and the supra-lapsarian members of Synod. The point at issue was the question: "Who is the object of election?" The Arminians taught the believer was, making faith the ground for election. All members of Synod rejected this. Infralapsarians, many of them foreign theologians, regarded fallen man as the object of God's election or reprobation.

[2] The Synod of Dort has been labelled the "persecuting Synod." It is quite true that two hundred Remonstrant ministers were deposed from their office. Of

these, a total of eighty were banished, nearly seventy agreed to be silenced and refrain from their ministry, and forty, upon conforming to the decisions of Synod, were restored to their office. It is also true that the political leaders of the Remonstrants were arrested. Van Oldenbarnevelt, declared guilty of treason, was beheaded on May 14, 1619. This prompted the grim joke from Diodati, the delegate from Geneva, that "the Canons of Dort had shot off the Advocate's head" (Dewar 115). But, the error of those who advocated and practised what would now be considered persecution was a general error of the age.

# 85. The Sign of Authority

## 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

Christ is not only the "*prince of the kings of the earth*," he is head of the church and the head of every individual man.

The sign of that authority is that men remove their hats in prayer, and women veil themselves in public prayer. When a man removes his hat, he does so as a matter of respect for his Lord; when a woman veils herself, she declares that she is under God's law-order and that men should recognize and surrender to His authority.

The Apostle Paul informed Timothy that the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16) and this passage is no exception.

We believe in the principle of Sola Scriptura; and, therefore, the Biblical practice of headcoverings.

Further, we confess Sola Gloria, and therefore, assert that that the instructions on this subject in 1 Corinthians 11 suitably glorifies Christ and humbles man.

The topic of 1 Corinthians 11 is **headship** [11:1-2], **headcovering** [11:3-16], and **head remembering** [11:17ff].

**Three heads** are mentioned: the headship of God, the headship of Christ, and the headship of man / husband.

Because the woman recognizes her subordinate role in the world and wants to please God, she veils herself as a symbol of her submission to the authority of the man who is obligated to protect her. The wearing of a veil is a sign the woman recognizes and honors God's law-order; that she understands the curse on women and is committed to resist it (Genesis 3:16; Proverbs 21:9, 19); that all men ought to recognize His authority and surrender to Him.

The objectors argument that this ordinance is cultural is no more a local custom than baptism or the Lord's Supper.

For more on this subject, see Stockton's, "The Case for Headcoverings" at https://nikeinsights.famguardian.org/publications/.

# 86. A Rebel's Prayer

## Matthew 6:9-10

### *"Thy Kingdom Come"*

**A Morning Prayer**

Our precious Lord taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom Come." It is part of the Lord's Prayer a.k.a. the "Disciples' Prayer."

Positively, it is a plea that all men and all man's institutions would surrender to be ruled by God's law; negatively, it is *coup de'etat* against godless authorities and de facto officials.

This is the rebel's prayer—a revolutionary's cry against the immorality of this age and the promotion of wickedness by men in rebellion against the Creator.

This prayer is God's permission to resist evil, to take the high road, and swim against the stream; it allows men to shout "*No King, but King Jesus*." It is permission to believe "one absolute God and one absolute law" and to adopt the motto "one nation under one God and one absolute law."

It is a prayer against the belief that man is god; that government is god; that mans' law or his constitutions are absolute.

It is a prayer against the status quo where ambitious men seek to advance the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is a prayer against abortion, oppression, homosexuality, pornography, and greed.

It is a prayer against secularism, atheism, humanism, socialism, Marxism and every other ism wherein secularists seek to build a city where man is the measure of all things.

It is a prayer against rulers in rebellion against "the LORD and His Anointed"—against governments who seek to enslave and control men through coercion, intimidation, and fear.

It is a prayer against governments hostile to the maxim that the Bible is the Source of all Law; and, it is a prayer against governments that break their own laws.

It is a prayer against unjust laws and legislators "who do mischief through law" by creating a system of man-made statutes and codes that enslave their citizenry [Ps. 94:20]; who seek to create a new world order through law; who promote alien laws that undermine the Ten Commandments and the virtues they advance: faithfulness, justice, and mercy.

It is a prayer against those who defraud others; against rulers that steal from the people through color of law; against unlawful taxation that transfers power from the family to the State.

If you are angry at godless politicians, this prayer if for you: *"Lord, Thy kingdom Come."*

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